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Publisher & Senior Editor - Joseph Roberts
Managing Editor - Sonya Weir
Advertising Sales -Adam Sealey, Alastair Gregor, Phil Watson
Design & Production - www.perubluesky.ca
Proofing - Anthony Prosk
Special Events Coordinator - Alastair Gregor

Contributors:
Robert Alstead, Alan Cassels, Carolyn Herriot, Thomas King, Paul Lemay Joel Lord, Bruce Mason, Joy McCarthy, Susan McCaslin, Mac McLaughlin, Vesanto Melina, Gwen Randall-Young, Joseph Roberts, Chris Shirley, David Suzuki, Eckhart Tolle, Rodney Watson

Sales - Head office 604-733-2215
toll-free 1-800-365-8897

Contact Common Ground:
Phone: **604-733-2215** Fax: 604-733-4415
Advertising: adam@commonground.ca
phil@commonground.ca
alastair@commonground.ca
Editorial: editor@commonground.ca

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Cooperation works in Canada

TOMMY Douglas said, "You can lock up a mouse or a man but you cannot lock up an idea." Douglas, through working with others, co-created the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which birthed Canada's first Medicare Program. The CCF became the NDP.

Years later, Stephen Harper jockeyed a coalition between the Reform, Canadian Alliance and Progressive Conservative parties to seize government. Then Harper denied Canadians true democracy when he repeatedly prorogued Parliament to stay in office. There is now a plan to take Canada back. Leadnow.ca and David Suzuki endorse the plan and the plan is based on cooperation, which leads to unity and strength. To win back Canada from Harper's damaging governance, the NDP, Liberals and Greens must do what is best for Canada and cooperate. The progressive people in each party need to put aside their differences and work together for the benefit of Canada. This is our time to take back our power. Get involved. Read the article "Put Canada First" in this edition. This is how we find common ground.

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Rodney Watson photo by Ian Azariah

A war resister speaks from the heart

My name is Rodney Watson; I am a U.S. Army Iraq war veteran who went AWOL after serving my country in a one-year deployment to Mosul Iraq, from October 2005 to October 2006. During my deployment, my eyes were opened to the fact that we should never have been there at all. I was willing to risk my life just like many other brave souls who thought we were doing the right thing by taking part in protecting America's freedoms, but I found out the hard way that I was risking my life for a lie.

My reasons for joining were honourable and even though there was no draft like the past Vietnam War, I was caught up in a personal economic draft due to the fact I could not find a job shortly after 9/11. After I lost my job of seven years in Kansas City, a long-time childhood friend offered to get me started in the illegal drug trade and even fronted me some free work, but this was against everything I believed in. Selling death to my own community was not the destiny I wanted for myself so while driving back home I got on the highway and prayed for a better way to make money. I threw the drugs out of my car window went home and prayed again and fell asleep with a now clear conscience.

The very next morning, I got a phone call just minutes after I opened my eyes. It was the older brother of my friend who fronted me the drugs I had thrown away and in a sad voice he told me to turn on the news; his brother had been shot that morning and was dead. I attended his funeral and shortly afterward I flew to New York to visit my cousin to clear my mind because it felt like some sort of tragic sign from above.

Out of work and living off money I had saved up that was running out fast, I needed a job urgently. While I was in New York, I saw where the Twin Towers had fallen. Tears fell from my eyes and the pain was great. I saw U.S. Navy sailors during Fleet Week that same day and I felt something I had never felt before – a feeling of it being my duty to serve my country like others in my family had done during WW2. I later ended up staying with a friend of my cousins in Stamford Connecticut and tried applying for some jobs one last time before making my decision to see an Army recruiter. With still no luck finding work, I made the decision to join up and serve my country as an Army cook to help out and to support our brave troops in some way even if it wasn't infantry. I wanted to serve in some way and possibly open up my own diner after my service was completed.

I was sent to Fort Hood Texas after boot camp only to find myself in the field training for a deployment to Iraq in the near future. I understood that I was a soldier first and that I might even die over there, but I had already seen much violence and death back in Kansas City and I was not afraid of losing my life *continued p.29...*

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Briefing Notes on Prescription Drugs

Disordering normal 5.0

Here comes the new DSM

Towards the end of May, the fifth version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), the iconic bible of psychiatry, is coming off the presses after much revision and delay. It's bound to keep people asking, "Am I normal or do I have a mental illness?"

If you think most diseases are established with objective criteria and rigorous debate, you'd be somewhat wrong. The DSM has a strong track record of taking clusters of symptoms and wrapping labels around them, which lead to the accelerated use of some of the most toxic medications on the planet. How does this happen?

The DSM is owned and operated by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), an organization that many feel is itself owned and operated by the pharmaceutical industry. Seventy percent of the authors of the DSM-V have declared ties to pharmaceutical manufacturers and in some disease categories it's 100%. This is the bizarre situation we've shamelessly come to accept: Big Pharma is allowed to put their own people on the committees to define what is and isn't illness.

Many people agree that the old DSM-IV has been responsible for widening disease definitions and accelerating the medicalization of many diseases such as autism, ADHD and bipolar disorder. The principle here is that the broader you define a disease, the more people can be defined as having it and the bigger the market for drugs for the condition. The new bible will have more disease labels constructed from personality quirks, mood upheavals, normal bouts with sadness or common signs of aging, inevitably leading to even more prescribing.

A new category of mental illness known as "mild cognitive impairment" is the first time the label of 'pre-dementia' will apply to whole populations. Let me ask (most gently) who among us is not 'pre-demented? In addition to the worries around our aging tendency to forget names, words and where we put the keys, we now have a name for it. As one ad for Alzheimer's medications asks, "Is it just forgetfulness? Or maybe it's "Pre-Alzheimer's?" What better way to get perfectly healthy people to start shuffling down the cattle ramp towards a good jolt of the yet-to-be-launched pre-dementia medicines that the drug industry will soon be zapping us with? There are none yet, but trust me; those drugs are in the pipeline.

Right now, there is no cure or treatment for Alzheimer's disease and unfortunately the drugs that do exist are next to useless. They are promoted as "slowing the rate of decline," but there is little evidence to support that claim and they make many patients miserable with vomiting and severe nausea. Alzheimer's is devastating for families but no one can explain how much anyone would benefit from adding "pre-dementia" to the burgeoning list of categories of mental illness.

How about grieving? According to a recent medical journal article, about 280,000 Canadians die every year and many of us are deeply affected by the death of loved ones. We experience profound grief and, for some, dealing with loss is very difficult. But here's the hitch: What used to be considered a normal response to loss is now in the gambit of being considered a mental disorder.

Psychiatrist Dr. Allen Frances, who led the creation of the DSM-IV and lists its many sins, says the new DSM-V is going to be a disaster on the bereavement issue, adding that changing the definition of what is considered depressed (by including bereavement) "inflates estimates of the current incidence of depression in epidemiological studies" and will automatically ramp up even more demands for medical services and antidepressant medication. Should people who experience severe grief be tossed a pill that will, in effect, eclipse the many social and familial ways we have of dealing with loss? The makers of the new DSM-V think so.

Another new definition in the DSM-V suggests that being worried about disease and searching for information about it on the Internet is now worthy of a mental diag-

nosis. Last December, Dr. Frances blogged on the *Psychology Today* website about the DSM-V, stating, "One in six people suffering from cancer, heart and other serious diseases risks being saddled with a psychiatric diagnosis just because they are worried about their illness or spending more time on the internet researching their symptoms than the American Psychiatric Association (APA) thinks good for them."

Add the word 'Cyberchondria' to the list of new mental health diagnoses.

And since we're in the game of naming pathologies that seem highly aberrant, maybe there are some that haven't made it into the new DSM. I'm thinking specifically of the types of illnesses that seem prevalent in corporate environments and bureaucracies.

Last fall, there was a mass firing of staff at the BC Ministry of Health amid allegations of privacy breaches, conflicts of interest and inappropriate data access procedures. Nothing of this magnitude has ever happened in the provincial government, but because the Ministry is so tight-lipped about its prolonged investigation, we can only do what the psychiatrists do – suggest new disease categories based on observation and speculation.

Here's the scene: After a long summer of interrogations and job suspensions, six employees at the BC Ministry of Health were fired and a seventh is suing for constructive dismissal. One is now dead and we don't know why. A pile of drug safety evaluations were halted and no one can say what it is really all about. This is significant because usually your mental illness only hurts yourself and those close to you. But what if your mental illness hurts the people who work for you?

> Seventy percent of the authors of the DSM-V have declared ties to pharmaceutical manufacturers and in some disease categories it's 100%. This is the bizarre situation we've shamelessly come to accept.

The fired Ministry employees, who were working on or evaluating drug safety in the province, were possibly ready to uncover problems with many commonly used drugs. The only credible explanation for the mass firings is that lobbyists for the pharmaceutical industry in BC were putting pressure on Ministry bureaucrats, thus creating pathologies worthy of inclusion in the DSM-V. Here are two possible candidates:

Bureaucratic anaphylaxis: Bureaucratic anaphylaxis is where a small allergen (a whiff of wrongdoing) sends the bureaucracy into paroxysms of power-wielding, Kafkaesque interrogations and seemingly random firings and no one in power is willing to explain anything. This behaviour may be due to the willingness of bureaucrats to allow Big Pharma to influence them in ways that seem rational to pharma's investors, but perversely nutty to anyone else.

Career advancement disorder: There are a number of senior officials in the Ministry (I could name names, but I won't for now) who, through all this, have exhibited an extreme careerism, blindly crushing others' fingers as they climb the corporate ladder. These bureaucrats seem to exhibit indifference to the public's concerns and feel that displacing people in the Ministry who do independent evaluations is justifiable because the orders came from above. Here's one very popular speculation: The Ministry's senior people probably believe they'll be unemployed after the next election so in the name of career advancement they're carrying out a scorched-earth policy to please their buddies at Pharma should they find themselves out of jobs. This scandal reveals a highly politicized environment in the health bureaucracy where no one speaks out against injustice, stupidity and bureaucratic anaphylaxis and where the orders of your bosses, no matter how bizarre, counter-productive or illegitimate, must be followed.

Let me dedicate this column to Stanley Milgram, the obedience researcher who showed how extreme obedience is in itself a serious mental pathology that is alive and well in many of today's hierarchies. Even in sunny Victoria. As I said, for disease-watchers this is going to be a banner year.

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria and the author of **Seeking Sickness: Medical Screening and the Misguided Hunt for Disease.**

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Joy McCarthy

Holistic health tips

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People are completely time-starved these days. Not cooking at home as much and eating fast food on the go has created the need to maximize the nutritional content of every morsel consumed. This is why adding supplements such as fish oil or a protein powder to your diet is a growing trend and a simple way to improve overall nutrition.

You can easily increase fibre in your diet – so important for intestinal health, weight loss and proper detoxification – by adding a high-quality fibre supplement to your meal. To increase the omega-3s in your diet, add a supplement to your salad dressing or smoothie or just drizzle it lightly over pasta. There is an array of flavoured omega-3 fish oils that don't taste fishy at all. Protein powders are another supplement that easily mixes in with just about anything – you can choose unflavoured or flavoured (vanilla, chocolate, berry). And lastly, greens powders are another great alternative that provide a megawatt dose of bio available minerals.

Organic foods have many benefits

When possible, it is ideal to incorporate organic foods into your diet for several reasons:

- Organic products have been grown and handled according to strict procedures, without persistent toxic chemical inputs.
- These foods are made without the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).
- Organic farming practices help maintain a clean water supply, as well as soil health and fertility.
- Organic farming can use 30-50% less energy so going organic reduces your carbon footprint and helps fight climate change.

Tips for enhancing your diet

- Mix in 1 tbsp. vanilla or chocolate protein powder into yogurt.
- Mix protein powder into your pancake mix in place of flour.
- Mix 1 scoop of vanilla protein powder into oatmeal with 1 tbsp. chia and mash a banana into the mixture. Protein balances blood sugar, keeps you fuller longer and increases your body's metabolism rate, which means you burn fat more efficiently.
- Mix 1 tbsp. of a flavoured omega-3 oil into your favourite salad dressing concoction. The omega-3s will help you to beautify from the inside out. Omega-3s have been extensively studied for their heart health benefits as well.
- Mix 1 tbsp. of any greens powder into your smoothie. Add a banana and a protein powder and you won't even notice the taste of the greens. You will get a hit of alkalizing minerals, fibre and chlorophyll.

It is important to consult your health care practitioner about your health concerns and to determine a regime and the products appropriate for your condition. In addition, always follow the directions found on the label and allow the specified amount of time allocated for the product to be effective.

Supplements for detoxing

B vitamins form a vitamin complex that is made up of several different nutrients. The B-complex, which consists of thiamin, riboflavin, pyridoxine, cobalamin, niacin, pantothemic acid, folic acid, biotin and paba, makes up a group of essential nutrients that aid cell growth, fight aging, depression and fatigue, and keep the mind and body healthy. When it comes to healing and rebuilding tissue, the B vitamins are absolutely essential.

Vitamin C is an essential water-soluble vitamin that has many functions in the body including the support of immunity, wound healing, healthy skin and bones, collagen formation and tissue growth and repair. Vitamin C is also a powerful antioxidant that helps detoxify or cleanse the body from harmful substances.

Any greens supplement is good for daily cleansing, which helps to keep your stomach clean. Usually, green super foods include wheat grass, barley grass and chlorophyll and sea vegetables that are packed with fibre, antioxidants and minerals to clean out toxins from the day before. Also choose foods with natural cleansing properties including fruits, vegetables, raw foods and whole grains with lots of fibre to keep your system moving.

Probiotics are the friendly bacteria that reside in the gastrointestinal tract, enabling us to properly digest any food and absorb vitamins and other nutrients. They also make your bowel inhospitable for bad bacteria and help to eliminate the effects of toxins and environmental pollutants in your body. Ideally, healthy and pathogenic micro-organisms balance each other out in the intestines. However, the balance is easily disrupted by the modern diet based on foods high in refined carbohydrates and sugars, chlorinated water, antibiotic and medications, etc. Yeast overgrowth starts in the intestines, causing digestive problems such as gas, bloating and constipation. This overgrowth can also become systemic, resulting in allergies and autoimmune disorders. Taking a probiotic supplement is an important step in establishing normal intestinal flora and it also boosts immune response and inhibits growth of pathogenic organisms.

NAC (N-Acetyl-Cysteine) is a natural sulfur-containing amino acid derivative found naturally in foods. It is a powerful antioxidant and cell detoxification co-factor and works to eliminate your body of free radicals and heavy metals such as mercury and lead. This improves your cellular health tremendously. *continued p.10...*

Chris Shirley

Where it began

Pacific Institute of Reflexology

We are pleased to introduce a new column in Common Ground*. In recognition of the individuals and businesses making a difference in their communities, "Where It Began" will feature their unique stories about how they got started. We hope you enjoy their offerings.*

When I was asked to write on this topic my immediate response was, "My God, that seems so far back, it is completely foggy." However, it was not long before it all came back to me. I had just completed two years of post-graduate studies in counselling at the University of Victoria and I had moved to Vancouver to "get a job." I knew only one person in Vancouver – Ricki, a fellow UVic graduate who had moved to the city a few months prior. One Sunday morning, I had nothing to do and nowhere to go so I gave Ricki a call. She was on her way out the door, but extended an invitation for me to join her at the Kit's Day Celebration event. At Connaught Park, Ricki had a pup tent set up with a reflexology chart displayed on the side. Well, it didn't make any sense to me; no one has a liver in their foot! But I was curious. Not wanting to display my ignorance in front of Ricki's friends – who had all come to support her at this event – I waited until everyone had left before asking Ricki about reflexology. Her response was so nonchalant I began to wonder if she was a medicine woman and my interest was piqued.

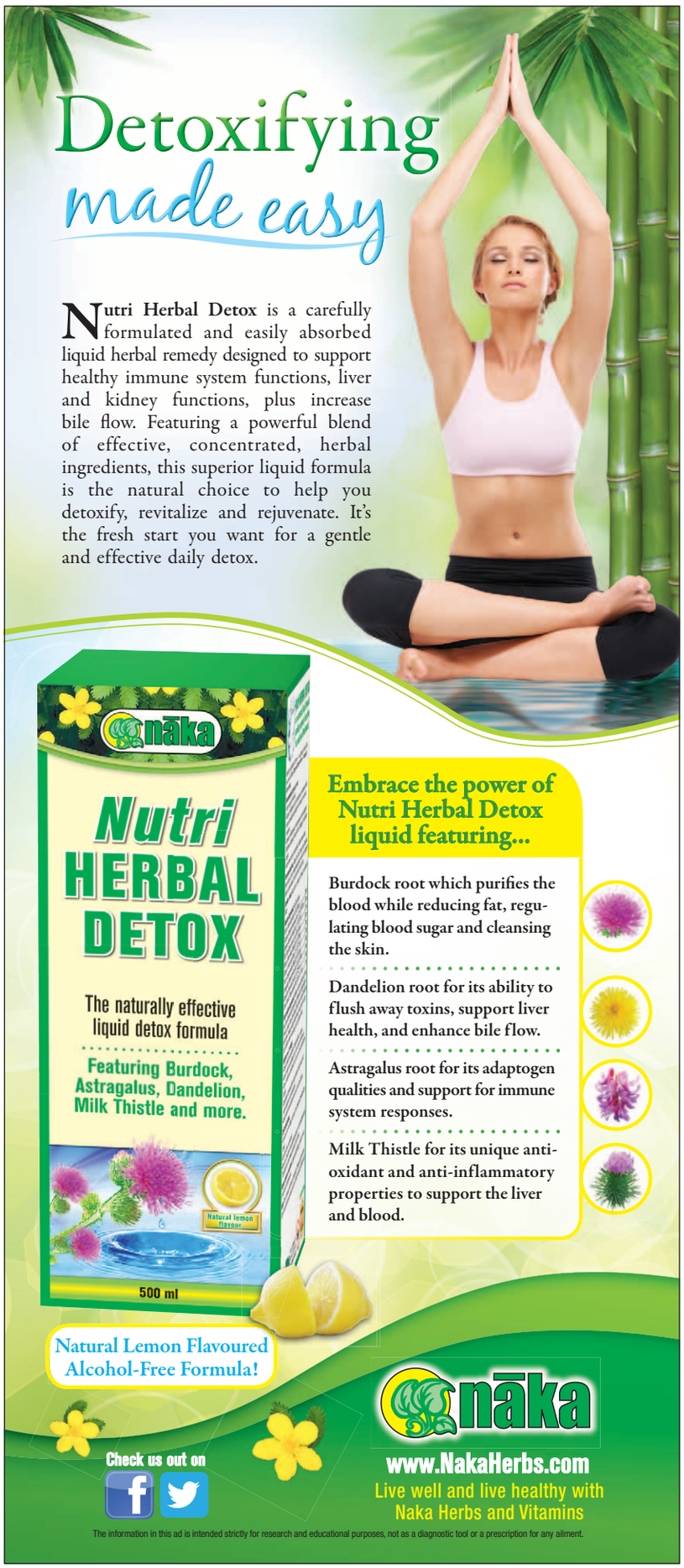
Chris Shirley, founder, Pacific Institute of Reflexology

Months went by and the topic of reflexology frequently arose in conversations, keeping my curiosity alive. After about three years, I was feeling a bit burned out in my work assisting children and their families, and political circumstances conspired for me to become unemployed. One day, after my regular swim at the Aquatic Centre, while indulging in a meditative sauna, I overheard two teenagers talking loudly as they approached. Much to my chagrin, they entered the sauna and continued their conversation as if I didn't exist. But I realized they were talking about reflexology! One of them mentioned Laura Kennedy, a reflexologist who had come up in conversations I had had with other people. I made a mental note of her name and decided to look her up that very day. I called and went to her home where I experienced my first reflexology session. It was amazing.

At Connaught Park, Ricki had a pup tent set up with a reflexology chart displayed on its side. Well, it didn't make any sense to me; no one has a liver in their foot! But I was curious.

I returned for many sessions with Laura and during one session a woman asked her about a course she was teaching. After the woman left, I learned from Laura that she was teaching reflexology evening courses and that I could attend. Wow, I could actually learn how to do this magnificent therapy. I signed up right away. On the last evening of the course, Laura gave us a test. Unfortunately, I had a conflicting engagement that night so I repeated the course in order to complete it. My path into developing the Pacific Institute of Reflexology had begun.

Chris Shirley has operated the Pacific Institute of Reflexology since 1982. The Institute is located at 535 West 10th Avenue in Vancouver and offers reflexology training courses, reflexology products, resources and student and professional reflexology clinics. www.pacificreflexology.com, 604-875-8818 or 1-800-688-9748.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... ***Holistic*** *from p.8*

Fibre supplements: Harmful toxins in our air, water and food can slow down your metabolism, resulting in increased storage of body fat and low energy levels. Dietary fibre supplements support healthy detoxification, increase transit time and cleanse the colon. They assist your body's ability to flush out harmful toxins and become more naturally energized.

Supplements that can help reduce stress

Vitamin C: People who have high levels of vitamin C do not show the expected mental and physical signs of stress when subjected to acute psychological challenges. They also bounce back from stressful situations faster than people with low levels of vitamin C in their blood.

B vitamins (see page 8)

Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*) is a herb that has long been valued for its prolific medicinal importance. Chamomile is a natural aid for those suffering from sleep disturbances. Chamomile is most commonly sold as an herbal tea, either loosely, to be used with an infuser, or in tea bag form.

American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*): Recent research shows it can be an important rebalancing agent for women during their hormonal change of life. Generally, American Ginseng supports the adrenal glands and increases tolerance for stress. It also helps mental concentration and gives you an energy boost.

Green powders are one of the best ways to get the body back on track toward total wellness and there are many benefits on many different systems of the body, including detoxification, blood sugar regulation, cholesterol regulation, and more. One benefit many people are not aware of is that it boosts energy.

Supplements with adrenal tissue (porcine): As far back as 1918, scientists were able to show that, when a particular gland is consumed, the constituents of that gland are incorporated into the same gland within the body. These constituents provide natural building blocks that can be readily incorporated into your same glands to strengthen them and support their healthy function.

Rhodiola rosea (golden root, roseroot, Aaron's rod) is a plant that grows in cold regions of the world. It has been extensively studied in Russia and in Scandinavian countries for over 35 years and is categorized as an adaptogen because of its ability to increase resistance to chemical, biological and physical stressors. Rhodiola has been found to inhibit stress-induced depletion of important brain neurotransmitters

Magnesium citrate (mineral) is the anti-stress mineral. Serotonin, the feel-good brain chemical that is boosted artificially by some medications, depends on magnesium for its production and function. Magnesium deficiency is responsible for nervousness that prevents sleep. Magnesium-rich foods include kelp, wheat bran, almonds, cashews, blackstrap molasses and brewer's yeast.

Valerian (Valeriana officinalis) is a root that has been used as a sedative for years and is now a proven anti-anxiety herb. Valepotriate is the main substance found in valerian and has the sedative effect. Valerian is safe, effective and natural and hence it is widely accepted. It reduces stress, anxiety, agitation, tremors and disturbances and is advantageous if you want to lessen mild to reasonable anxiety or stress during the day. It leads to prolonged sleep, less time in falling sleep and it promotes deep sleep.

> The B-complex... makes up a group of essential nutrients that aid cell growth, fight aging, depression and fatigue, and keep the mind and body healthy.

Detoxifying decoctions are made by boiling roots, barks and herbs in water and reducing the volume before straining out the solid bits to make a tea. Herbs used in these decoctions include dandelion roots (for liver, gall bladder and kidneys), marshmallow root (to sooth digestive membranes), licorice root (for adrenal glands), burdock root (a diuretic for blood, kidneys and the urinary tract), rhubarb root (for the immune system, the liver and colon cleansing) milk thistle (for the liver) and ginger root (for the kidneys).

Please visit www.chfa.ca for more information. Joy McCarthy is a registered/certified holistic nutritionist CNP RNCP, who coaches clients from around the world including Australia, Europe, the US and Canada. She has attended CHFA West 2012. www.joyoushealth.ca

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Orange infused walnut kale salad

Ingredients
(Try to use organic ingredients.)

6-8 handfuls of kale (I used baby kale that was organic and pre-washed)
3/4 cup walnuts
2 small oranges sliced
Dressing:
1/3 cup sesame or extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup brown rice vinegar
4 tbsp orange (naturally) flavoured omega-3 fish oil. (Note: This does not have a fishy taste. I used the Genuine Health brand.) If you don't have this or you are vegan, use hemp or flax oil.
1/2 cup fresh mint
Fresh juice from 1 orange
2 tbsp orange rind

Method
Place all your dressing ingredients into a food processor and blend until the mint is completely chopped up, about 30 seconds. Place your leafy greens into a large bowl and toss with the dressing. Sprinkle with walnuts and orange slices.
Makes 4 generous servings.

Workshop, Retreat & Seminar Leaders Will Save The World!

We live in turbulent times. The world feels shaky. Some people are suffering with health issues. Others with rocky relationships or job stress. Most are very concerned about the economy and the environment. Faith in politicians is dropping, and a deep craving for other kinds of leadership is rising. Thankfully, there are new leaders stepping up to help! They're our modern day teachers…educated and talented Workshop Leaders. And they're here to Save the World. We caught up with Callan Rush, a leading expert on designing & delivering lucrative, life-changing workshops:

Q: What does the workshop industry look like today, Callan?

A: It's a great industry to be involved in right now. As you mentioned, times are uncertain – and people are scared. Human beings inherently know there is safety in numbers. Naturally, people want to GATHER right now! This is why the workshop industry is thriving, while other businesses tank. Providing a place for people to connect, feel inspired, get skills and acquire education just makes sense.

Q: What's the #1 BLOCK these grass roots World Leaders face?

A: The biggest block Workshop Leaders face has to do with FILLING THEIR EVENTS. "Poor attendance" or "not enough people in the seats" are the main complaints. And I get it! It's no fun working hard to get the word out, prepping your material… and then showing up to face an empty event room. It's totally disheartening. Disheartened leaders are NOT what the world needs right now. What also concerns me is this; the people who really need help, whether in the health, wealth, relationship or other area of life, continue to suffer unnecessarily simply because they didn't know there was a workshop leader who could help. My business partner spent 31 years suffering with debilitating stomach pain. One day, he found a Holistic Nutrition Workshop that helped cure him. I shudder to think what his life would have been like without that workshop.

Q: What do you tell Workshop Leaders who come to you looking for advice?

A: I say the same thing over and over. If you believe in what you are up to in the world, it's your duty and your dharma to do whatever it takes to learn to attract the people you are meant to serve! This starts with education. Filling your workshops CAN be quite easy… if you know the fundamental elements. As a former teacher, I pride myself in being able to show even the most 'non-business' types how to easily, effectively and economically use things like, 'email marketing' and 'word of mouth marketing.' I show them how marketing can actually feel good to them, great to their clients, and STILL get an awesome result. This means full workshops, healthy people, and inspired Leaders. I like to think of myself as a bridge between the people who are suffering, and the leaders that have the solutions.

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Top tips for homegrown food

Seed selection: To answer the question "What shall I grow?" ask yourself what you and your family most like to eat. It also makes sense to grow food that costs more to buy, especially when gardening space is an issue. Select varieties that will mature and produce in your garden's microclimate.

Soil: Most vegetables grow best in full sun in well-drained fertile soil (pH 6-7.5). Any site receiving seven to 11 hours of sun a day would work. Adding organic matter builds humus in the soil, which increases its ability to hold nutrients and moisture.

Practise the four secrets of successful soil building by digging in compost, manure, leaves and seaweed. Make great compost using layers of leaves, weeds (no seeds), herbaceous clippings, manure (can be fresh), grass clippings, spoiled hay, seaweed, sawdust, comfrey, nettles and horsetail.

Fertilizers: Slow-release, natural-source fertilizers nourish the teaming microscopic soil life that makes nutrients available to plants.

Make your own fertilizer blend by mixing:
4 parts by volume organic seed meal (N)
1part dolomite lime (pH)
1 part rock phosphate (P)
½ part kelp meal (K)

Companion planting: Diversity is the key to maintaining health and balance in the garden. Communities of plants work together to keep bugs at bay, attract pollinators and improve plant growth. Plant small fruits and flowers and herbs around your food garden.

Crop rotations: When the same species of plant is grown in the same place year after year, it's a question of time before problems arise. Moving plants around breaks the life cycle of common pests and diseases because the host plant is no longer present for them to feed on.

Pest prevention: Sticky traps can be used as a monitor or a cure for potential problems in the greenhouse and garden. Tip: To make your own, cover bright yellow squares of cardboard with Tanglefoot. Deer, rabbits, birds and raccoons can play havoc in food gardens – try netting and physical barriers to prevent this; large dogs also work wonders!

Seeding: March/April used to be planting months, but now we often wait until June before conditions settle. If you don't have a greenhouse, improvise using recycled wood and glass windows as cold frames or construct plastic hoop houses for protection. Container gardening works well in poor summers for many heat-loving plants such as tomatoes, peppers, beans, cucumbers, eggplant and basil.

Weed control: Spring is the best time to weed when the soil is still moist. Set up a regular date with weeds, roaming around the garden and pulling them up, especially invasive, deep-rooted plants such as buttercup and dandelion. Tip: Chickweed is delicious steamed.

Saving seeds: If you want to save seeds, sow open-pollinated varieties that haven't had their genetic makeup changed by hybridization or genetic modification. Plants adapt to cultural conditions, therefore, organic seeds grow best for organic gardeners and regional seeds have an edge over seeds grown in other climates.

Winter gardening: Why leave beds empty from October to April when there are so many food plants that can be harvested throughout winter? Tip: Purchase winter garden seeds in spring to ensure you have the seeds to sow winter food in summer.

Carolyn Herriot is author of **The Zero-Mile Diet** and **The Zero-Mile Diet Cookbook** (Harbour Publishing). She grows "Seeds of Victoria" at the Garden Path Centre.
www.seedsofvictoria.com

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Nutrispeak Vesanto Melina, MS, RD

Is microwaving safe?

Many of us wonder if microwave ovens are sending us to the cancer ward or creating weird molecules in food that our bodies can't handle. Most Canadian homes have microwaves so they obviously have wide appeal. But what do we know of their health implications? How does microwaving affect nutrients in food?

This cooking method originated when engineer-inventor Percy Spencer was building radars in the 1940s and found that microwaves melted the candy bar in his pocket. Seven years later, the first "radarange" – seven feet tall, 700 pounds – was used at a Boston restaurant. The name was changed to "microwave oven" and a small unit was introduced for home use in 1967. In that era, women were entering the workforce and timesaving kitchen devices were welcome.

Microwaves are produced when a magnetron tube converts an electric current to electromagnetic (EM) radiation, similar to radio or light waves. When this interacts with food molecules, heat is generated and food is cooked, starting from the inside. Microwaves can travel through glass, but are reflected from metals, thus doors have a metal screen. Microwave ovens have a better cooking efficiency (57%) than electric convection (17%) or gas convection (9%) ovens. Conventional cooking heats food from the outside by convection (baking), radiation (broiling) or conduction (frying) and the heat gradually travels inward.

The pluses

Surprisingly, microwave ovens cause *less* nutrient destruction than the more lengthy heating processes involved in baking, boiling or steaming. All cooking involves loss of vitamins and protective phytochemicals, yet among your options, microwaving can result in minimal losses.

When food is boiled, nutrients are leached into the water, which is often discarded. Thus boiling vegetables can strip more nutrients than microwaving. Protein is not damaged unless there is overcooking and that can happen with any form of heating. Microwave food the minimum time, with little or no cooking water.

Compared with toasting, baking, barbequing and frying, microwave cooking produces fewer carcinogens such as nitrosamines or the AGEs (Advanced Glycation End products), which give the desired browning, but are toxic.

Microwaves offer people with limited skills or time the opportunity to eat some nutritious meals and less junk food.

The minuses

Early microwave ovens leaked excessive EM radiation. Today's versions prevent leakage and result in less exposure than people get from cell phones. Yet we absorb EM radiation from power lines, cell phones, airplane flights, computers, fridges and more. Norbert Hankin of the Environmental Protection Agency says, "The real question remains whether there could be cumulative effects."

Over time, seals on microwave doors can lose effectiveness. Exposure to radiation is highest within two inches of the microwave so don't stand in front of it watching your food rotate. Place the microwave away from high traffic areas.

Many plastics, when heated, release toxic and hormone-disrupting compounds into the food. Don't microwave (or heat by other methods) food in plastic or Styrofoam.

Microwave-free options include heating water in an electric kettle and using a toaster oven. And leftovers don't always need reheating; they often taste fine cold. For maximum nutrition, choose a raw or high-raw diet.

Vesanto Melina is a local registered dietitian and co-author of bestselling nutrition books including **Becoming Raw.** Contact info: 604-882-6782, vesanto.melina@gmail.com, www.nutrispeak.com, www.facebook.com/Nutrispeak

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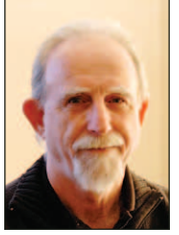

Mac McLaughlin

ZODIAC

StarWise

March 2013

THE SPRING equinox takes place on March 20. The position of the planets at the equinox is believed to hold the keys as to how the whole year will go; many ancient cultures held this belief. I compared the planetary positions in the equinox chart to Canada and Prime Minister Stephen Harper's birth charts and it tells quite the tale. Strap on your seat belts and make ready for a wild ride through time. Pluto holds a prominent position throughout the year indicating a time of transformation and regeneration. It is time for a makeover and a rebirthing of our values and our country's principles. There may be a great rift and division among the people and strife, conflict and resistance will be evident. This is how we go and this is how we grow; we voice our opinions and we put up the vote and abide by the will of the people.

Mars and Uranus are conjunct at the time of the equinox and in square with our Moon. It is another indicator we will experience some choppy waters, unrest and all kinds of movement and protestations. No sense hiding under your bed, but it does make sense to throw in your two cents and contribute to helping solve the concerns

ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19
The mystics teach us that we have 25% free will and 75% karmic indebtedness. The karma flows in its own way at the appropriate times in our lives. It's time to use that allotment of 25% free will. 2013 is the year that it all changes. Seek the truth, as it will set you free.

TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21
You may be feeling a little tired and it may be time to let up and relax for a while. The March planets offer up a time in which you can be flexible and possibly take a bit of time off. Then again you can resist and persist at your own risk. Enjoy the days.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20
It's your time to fly high and kiss the sky as Jupiter continues his visit until the end of June. Make good use of this energy. Join up with a group or society that reflects your values and interests. New friends come into the picture. Travel looms big and big things happen while travelling.

CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22
It's time to prepare for the future. The March planets indicate possible travel and dealing with education and publishing. Keep your foot on the gas and use that big pincer to hold on to your convictions and beliefs. Life gets notched up in the summer time. Opportunity knocks and doors fly open that were previously shut tight.

LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22
Your long-held beliefs might be evaporating. No worries. They will be replaced by astonishing, new revelations. Some Leo types are deeply mystical and if you are one of them, you have reached a time in which a deep understanding and awareness prevails.

VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22
You will have to be extra vigilant throughout the month of March, as the likelihood of misunderstandings and confusion is strong. You may need to take your time and set a pace you can live with. Read the fine print before signing on the dotted line. Measure twice, cut once, sounds about right. Avoid sloppy thinking and taking too many shortcuts. Work smart.

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on-board at this time. We will get nowhere by avoidance and we must help sort out the concerns of the day. Saturn is in very good aspect to the Sun and Moon this year and it is a very good harbinger that we are on the right track. We will sort through what must be done in order to find the balance.

Jupiter is waiting in the wings and in the midst of our labour he comes along and rewards us in a most plentiful way, as he transits over our Sun, Moon and Uranus in July and August this year and in the first four months of 2014. He is King of the Gods, bringing abundance, wealth, success and happiness. We are heading into a most exciting time. Rejoice and contribute however you can.

I wouldn't want to be in Stephen Harper's shoes, as the stars are indicating that a battle is brewing; 2013 could prove to be the most challenging and controversial time for his administration. Some loss is indicated and he will have to fight to keep his ship intact. He seems plenty capable and although we may not like his astringency measures, they may be necessary in order to trim the fat and cut back on waste and expenditures.

LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22
Make ready for a very exciting springtime. Romance and adventure may be the case. Activities heat up towards the end of the month as the Libra full Moon on March 27 illuminates your inner psyche. Be aware with all that you do, as there is a danger of mishaps or accidents taking place.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21
You may be working harder than ever, but the results may be slow coming in. You may find the power types are not receptive to your plans presently. Keep perfecting and polishing your skills, eliminating what you know is not worthy or useful. Health is the first consideration and all else stems from there.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21
Home and family are the main features now. Land and real estate may figure in somehow. You may be ambiguous and possibly conflicted as to what to do or how to go regarding your present circumstances. You may have more direction towards the end of the month and things may go in your favour.

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19
Keep an eye out for potential accidents and mishaps around the home. There's nothing to fear, except the stars are indicating potential concerns in that area. Projects regarding land and real estate could come up. Those born at the end of December and early January are in the midst of a great transformative process throughout 2013.

AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19
Some of you are going to reach your peak professionally this year or the next. Others of you may leave a long-time profession or experience a fall from grace. It may not be the case; much depends on how you got to the top in the first place. Honourable actions are applauded while misdeeds come to light.

PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20
March is your month and it should prove to be an exciting time. Love, romance, creativity and all kinds of activity keep you on the move. There may be some doubt and confusion, as misunderstandings are likely. Travel could be delayed and it is important to keep your documents together.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109

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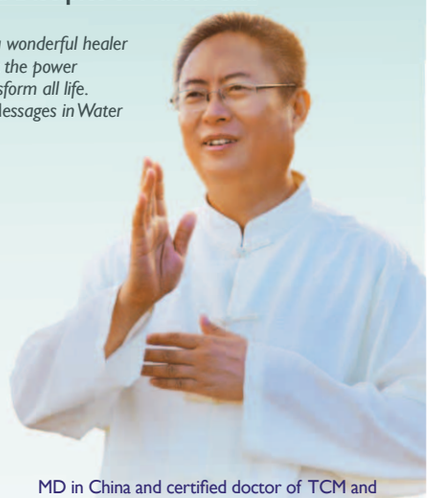

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The problem with vaccines

The Vaccine Resistance Movement is a grassroots, non-profit organization, empowering communities around the world with the means of self-sufficiency, while determined to expose vaccine fraud and pharmaceutical industry malfeasance.

March 12: VRM hosts "Vaccine Summit: Vancouver 2013" *– a major, interactive symposium on vaccines, featuring veteran researchers and nutritional experts via satellite from around the world. SFU Downtown Campus (Fletcher Challenge room), 515 Hastings St., Vancouver, 4-11PM. Suggested donation $25. Seating limited; arrive early.* ***www.vaccine****.*

photo © Khamidulin

The whole basis for vaccinations is unphysiological. The vast majority of infections enter the body through the nasal passages, the gastro-intestinal tract or the guts. Accordingly, 80% of the body's immune system is situated at these junctures – the natural first line of defence. Vaccines are injected into deep muscle tissue or subcutaneously; either route literally bypasses one's natural barriers altogether. Thus the body is left vulnerable to live viruses and heavy metals.

Many vaccines are laced with the adjuvant salt form of aluminum, directly linked to early onset Alzheimer's disease, Macrophagic Myofasciitis, chronic fatigue syndrome and thimerosal mercury, a devastating neurotoxin implicated in the explosive spread of autism, both linked to psychological, neurological and immunological problems. Heavy metals and live viruses eventually collect in areas of fatty tissue throughout the body, including the brain, and linger there for decades, upwards of a lifetime. Is it any wonder so many children have succumbed to autism during the earliest, most vulnerable stages of development?

A newborn lacks sufficient protection to guard against premature damage to the blood barrier on the brain. The myelin sheath, an insulator that protects the cells, is under-developed. Any exposure to heavy metals during the first two years is deadly and unwise. Aluminum causes brain swelling and interferes with the immune system directly. The MMR shot, typically given at 12-18 months is overwhelming and many children have suffered irreversible brain damage from its impact. And remember, children have already accumulated metals in the brain from earlier shots (Hep B, HIB, HBPV, OPV, DPT) so there is a threshold limit.

Vaccines are the main cause of autism primarily due to accumulative damage from the Hep B, MMR and DPT shots (multiple live viruses + heavy metal build-up) – leading to ischemia, a singeing of the neural pathways from toxic overload which prevents vital oxygen from reaching the brain, literally inhibiting normal development. Anaphylaxis, a system-wide allergic and functional breakdown, and encephalitis, inflammation of the brain resulting from vaccine-derived heavy metal sludge toxicity, inevitably follow.

According to Dr. John Cannell, "Autism is caused from a quantitative, not qualitative, variation in one of the enzymes that metabolize Vitamin D. That is, there are no structural differences in these enzymes in *continued p.38...*

Emotional decluttering

Freedom... is the act of releasing ourselves from the bondage of that which keeps us from living the life we were meant to live. – Kelli Wilson

When you live in the same place for a long time, you tend to accumulate clutter. Frequently, there are things you no longer need or use that are just taking up space. Sometimes, the clutter is a source of constant aggravation because you wish it would disappear.

Clutter may get in the way of doing what you really want because you can never find the things you need when you need them or simply because there is no room.

If you have never seriously decluttered, I can tell you it feels *good.* Just think how great it feels to even just clean your closet. You get a burst of energy, feel better about yourself and there's no more contracted energy from looking at an overcrowded, messy space. The closet now holds only what you really like and need and there is space to add something new, if you choose.

Your body-mind is the home you have lived in all your life. And, yes, it too has closets.

The main space of your life consists of all that is current. The closets hold your history – all the memories, joys, sorrows, hurts and resentments and even long-ago established beliefs about yourself. Some things are so far back in the closet you have forgotten about them altogether. This is your subconscious.

Some things are so far back in the closet you have forgotten about them altogether. This is your subconscious.

So how do you declutter your life? Much the same as you do a house or office. The difference is that with physical decluttering it has to do with usefulness. Emotional decluttering has to do with feeling.

Think of the people, situations and things that uplift you, bring you joy and energize you. Then think of those that stress you or that which you dislike, bring you down and deplete your energy. Take an honest inventory. This is not about what you *think*; it is about how you *feel*. Imagine you are a magnet. The things that are good for you create a sense of attraction. Those that are not create repulsion; you want to pull away from them.

Often, we keep things in our lives that do not serve us in a healthy way out of a sense of duty, obligation or not wanting to hurt another. This is similar to the hoarder who cannot let anything go.

You do not have to keep people in your life who are distressing to you even if they are family members. If you hate your job, get working on finding another. If you are always doing for others and it is draining you, start setting boundaries and learning to say "no."

Equally important is letting go of things we do that are harmful to ourselves. We have to assess our level of health and fitness, releasing bad habits and starting new ones.

Most important is decluttering our minds. We do not need self-criticism and judgment. We do not need worry and "what if?" thoughts. Throw them all away and make room for self-validation, encouragement, acceptance and love.

Nurture and protect the inner child who has carried all the pain and fear. Let that child know he/she is now your first priority and no longer needs to seek acceptance, love and validation somewhere 'out there' for it is, now and ever, right here.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, Deep Powerful Change Hypnosis CDs and new Creating Healthy Relationships series, visit www.gwen.ca See display ad this issue.

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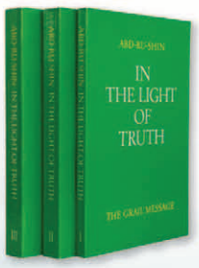

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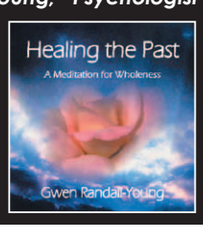

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Just now

an interview with Eckhart Tolle

To read Eckhart Tolle's latest column, please see the current print edition of Common Ground. For copyright reasons, we are authorized to publish this column in our print version only.

JR: In your new book, I feel like you're the modern equivalent of the explorers that came to the new world, but an explorer and documenter of consciousness, discovering a new world.

ET: Yes, discovering is the right word. It's not that you need to make a great effort to attain it or bring it about or acquire it. It's discovering it's already there in you – conscious awareness that's obscured, or partially obscured, in many people. It's a discovery of something already there.

Eckhart Tolle with *Common Ground* publisher Joseph Roberts. Photo by Ishi Dinim.

It's like waking up after a dream, because identification with the thinking mind and its stories and the old emotional conditioning is like being immersed in a kind of dream world, which very often turns into a nightmare – acting out old conditioned patterns again and again. The whole structure of the egoic mind is an old dysfunction.

There's some evidence that the ego started about 6,000 years ago, but nobody can say for sure. Before that, humans were in a state of innocence. When we go beyond the dysfunction of the ego, we regain our original innocence, but on a much deeper level. This is why Jesus said unless we become as little children we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

So, returning to the original innocence, and at the same time going much deeper into that with full awareness – that's the process. We're coming out of thousands of years of dreadful suffering, almost the whole of recorded history of humanity. If you really look at it in an unbiased way, as if you'd never seen it before, one cannot but admit that, to a large extent, 80 to 90 percent of it is a history of pathological insanity, the suffering that humans have created for themselves and, of course, inflicting it upon others.

JR: And exporting it through colonization to the new world.

ET: Yes, so the important part of the awakening process is the realization of the insanity in human history, collectively, to this day playing itself out in world events. Also, to be aware of the insanity within oneself – old, dysfunctional patterns that come again and again that create suffering. So when you see that you're insane, then you're not completely insane. Sanity comes the moment you realize the fact of insanity. To see insanity is not a negative thing.

JR: At least you're out of denial.

ET: Yes, that's why in the film A Beautiful Mind, for example, which is about a mathematical genius who did have a mental dysfunction, his mind was developed in certain areas but he was also insane. The viewer of the film doesn't know that until a certain point when the character realizes that many of his experiences are delusions. At that moment, his healing begins. He's not cured yet, but his healing begins because he's recognized his own insanity. That recognition can only come out of sanity, which is the awareness of unconditioned consciousness.

JR: I remember you saying before you published your last book that the next one would be about why there isn't peace on this planet. Was finding a solution one of the major intentions of A New Earth?

ET: Yes, to see the nature of the major dysfunction. That's why I talk quite a bit about the ego in this book. We need to recognize the nature of the dysfunction. Sometimes, even very great Eastern teachers sometimes neglect that part because they're not really touched by the magnitude of, especially, the Western ego. So it's very important for us to see the dysfunction so that we can recognize it when it arises.

Part of the new book is about recognizing the ego, which I regard as a semi-autonomous energy. It's an energy field. Every thought you think is an energy field. It has a form and then it dissolves and then there is another form. The ego itself is an energy field and it has a collective and individual aspect. Every individual ego is part of the collective. They're connected. Every individual is a manifestation of the collective. To recognize that is essential because the ego, being a very clever entity, has many ways of reappearing. Even if you've seen it in one disguise, it can suddenly reappear in a new one.

You might suddenly realize your whole sense of self, identity, is being derived from your possessions and social position. You see that your whole sense of identity is bound up with that and you recognize one aspect of ego. Well, usually it only comes to people when they suffer, when the identification with something no longer works…

It's recognizing the ego in its many disguises. I've met Buddhist monks who had enormous egos without knowing it. I remember being in a monastery afraid to approach them because they seemed so aloof. Yet I've met other Buddhist monks who were like little children and it was a joy to talk to them because they'd laugh and not take themselves seriously at all. They didn't take the whole Buddhist thing seriously either, yet they practised it knowing it was only a form and they weren't identified with it.

There's a dimension in us that has nothing to do with content. Self-realization is that I am not that. I'm not my story, not my grievances and hang-ups, not the story of me that I'm telling other people at parties or repeating in my head again and again. That is only form. It's temporary.

When you see what you're not, it's already liberating. Something inside you breathes a sigh of relief. Then, of course, the mind begins to ask, "What are you if you are not that?" It wants an answer. In other words, it wants some new form. It wants a new thought. There must be a thought that I am. But it doesn't work like that. That's why the great book the Tao Te Ching starts with the line that the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao because Tao – in the ancient Chinese way of putting it – is the formless dimension. You could say pure consciousness, but with any term we use we have to be careful it's not mistaken for "It." Otherwise, the mind comes in and says, "Oh, consciousness, yes. I believe that I'm consciousness." It's not another belief. It's finding that spaciousness inside yourself that's there when you let go of identification of form.

Excerpted from **Just now: a two-part interview with Eckhart Tolle** by Joseph Roberts. Read the full interview online. Go to www.commonground.ca Click on archives. Click on 2007 at the top of the page. For part one, click on September 2007. For part two, click on October 2007.

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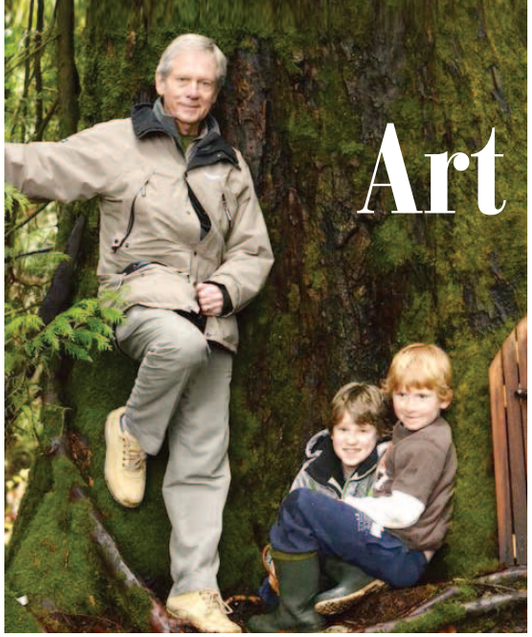

Artist and activist Robert Bateman toured McLellan Forest and has lent his support for the preservation of the rare ecosystem.

Art & activism

How an ancient poet inspired a local initiative to preserve McLellan Forest

Susan McCaslin photos by Erin Perry

Last Thanksgiving, I discovered that Glen Valley in Langley still had some mature rainforest. This discovery was bittersweet, however, as I also learned the Township of Langley was planning to sell it off to raise funds to build a recreation centre.

As my husband and I walked through the forest, we paused at the base of a giant black cottonwood, estimated to be at least 240 years old by local dendrologist David Jordan. I fell in love with the forest and for the first time since the Vietnam War decided I had to become a full-on activist.

Fortunately, this forest was publically owned. Another parcel had been taken off the market earlier because of the public outcry led by a local group of residents called WOLF (Watchers of Langley Forests). In October, WOLF was given 60 days to raise $3 million to purchase this second parcel known as McLellan Forest East.

Many felt it was unfair to force residents to buy back land that already belonged to them. Shouldn't there be other ways to raise funds for capital projects other than selling off a rare, wild ecosystem? If sold, the land would no longer be accessible to the public. It would cease to be a vital ecosystem.

Reports from biologists documented the ecological values of the forest in glowing but ominous terms such as "rare," "high value" and "extirpation." As a poet, I couldn't help but notice the contrast to the local government's language with words like "inventory," "surplus" and "idle land." A realtor's listing said it was a "heavily treed…blank canvas."

But what can an artist do? It occurred to me that poets understand the intrinsic value of nature and our need for it so I decided to organize "An Afternoon of Art and Activism" just to see what might happen. This event drew together local visual artists, poets, musicians, ecologists, photographers, a dancer and students.

A week later, 160 students from the Langley Fine Arts School poured out of two big, yellow buses to sketch and sing and photograph the forest. After sharing their art in the woods, they organized a poetry reading and filled a local café with their stunning photos.

Then my husband noticed an ad announcing that renowned wildlife artist Robert Bateman would be signing books in a nearby mall. He quickly emailed Bateman's website and within a few hours Bateman himself responded, saying, "This is important. I'll be there in the morning."

Bateman commented on the irony of selling a vital ecosystem in order to build a recreation centre elsewhere. "This is the recreation centre, right here!" he said, gesturing to the earth. The attention he generated was a pivotal point, but once it was over we asked "What now?"

I remembered studying the zesty poems of an old hermit monk from ancient China named Han Shan from Cold Mountain. There, he scribbled poems on rocks and suspended them from trees. Just as he inspired the beatnik poets of the sixties, Han Shan resurrected once again to become my mentor and muse. The Han Shan Poetry Project was born.

I put out a call for tree poems. My calls soon appeared on people's blogs and websites all over the world. Over 150 poems poured in within a week and a half and within two weeks the number had gone up to well over 200.

We placed the poems in sheet protectors, threaded them with colourful ribbon and festooned them from the trees. Poems poured in from all over the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and other provinces, as well as from New Mexico, California, Florida, the UK, Australia and Turkey. The exhibit included poems by celebrated Canadian poets like Lorna Crozier and Patrick Lane, Fred Wah (the Poet Laureate of Canada) and children as young as six years of age.

Poems pirouetted like white angels. Heavy drops of rain, frost, sprigs of moss and bark covered them, appearing to be the forest's way of claiming them. Poets had set their small gestures of creative expression beside the vaster creativity of nature. People were attracted from all over the Lower Mainland, strolling through the woods and pausing to read the poems. Local visual artist Susan Falk donated a painting to the ongoing work of WOLF. The Opus Women's Choir came out to sing carols in the forest.

Despite all this attention, the December fundraising deadline loomed and WOLF had to inform town Council they weren't able to raise the three million. We learned that other offers to purchase were in-hand and it could be sold quickly. A letter from the BC Ministry of Environment arrived that afternoon saying that, based on its ecological evaluation, the forest should be protected as an ecological reserve, but they too didn't have the money.

Decision-making was deferred and on January 29 the Langley Township announced it was taking three of the five parcels off the market. The community was relieved that 60% of the forest would be saved, but the compromise generated both elation and disappointment since the portion of land to be sold contains some of the most sensitive habitat for species at risk.

Clearly, it took many people to help persuade the politicians to reconsider a 'done deal' that could provide cash-in-hand. But what this experience prompts us to consider is the untapped potential of the arts to transform society. The success of this project shows how art and activism can dovetail in remarkable ways. Art pauses before beauty, raising the conflict between conservationists and developers beyond their various ends. It appeals to a common recognition of beauty in biodiversity.

An activist must live in the paradox of unknowing – perhaps without attachment to outcomes (though I find this difficult). Nature holds us within a larger story, a more expansive narrative; somehow, our words and actions matter. Yes, poetry matters, as old Han Shan himself told us some 1,200 years ago.

This story is not over, as taking the properties off the market is not the same as legal protection. There are some who recall fighting for the same patch of forest over a decade ago. You may wish to thank Langley township council and ask them to protect the species at risk habitat on the parcels to be sold and to follow through with formal dedication of the forests under section 30 of the Community Charter.

The Han Shan Poetry Project garnered hundreds of poems from all over the world.

The McLellan Forest issue also raises a bigger question for the coming provincial election: given that all local government powers come from the Province, what is the duty of local governments to conserve biological diversity and habitat for species at risk?

For more information:
http://mclellanpark.blogspot.ca (604) 866-2259
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Susan McCaslin is a poet and Faculty Emeritus of Douglas College. Her most recent volume, **Demeter Goes Skydiving** (University of Alberta Press) was a finalist for the BC Poetry Book Prize (Dorothy Livesay Award, 2011) and the 2012 winner of the Alberta Book Publishing Award (Robert Kroetsch Poetry Book Award). www.susanmccaslin.ca

Bruce Mason

Creating a community miracle

Gabriola Community Health Centre grand opening, August 5, 2012. Photo by Don Butt.

For many years, Gabriola Island – the most northern Southern Gulf Island – has been known as "Petroglyph Island" or "Isle of the Arts" because of its ubiquitous, ancient stone carvings and one of the highest per capita concentrations of artists in Canada.

Now, Gabriola Island has a new major attraction: a unique, multimillion-dollar community health centre situated on four acres of landscaped and forested land. Residents who built the impressive 9,000-square-foot facility themselves have dubbed it "The Miracle on Church Street." The Gabriola Community Health Centre is front and centre, with curious visitors arriving at the site every day, including delegations from other communities, with the question "How did they do it?" uppermost in their minds.

Part of the miracle includes no 'handouts.' Government contributed less than 10 percent to the project and no taxes were raised. Instead, Gabriola's population of 4,000 rallied by taking matters into their own hands, collecting $1.5 million and an equal amount of in-kind donations and volunteer labour. And when a site was donated, they assembled an army of 150 people.

By revitalizing the spirit of traditional barn and church-raising with 21st century resources and realities, everyone involved now insist similar miracles are within the reach of others, including legacy projects such as theatres, libraries, parks and rinks.

"The Centre represents the best in us, with important lessons for others," says volunteer coordinator John Campbell. "We don't necessarily need and should not rely on government. We can and must do it ourselves. And when a community makes that decision, everything changes."

Locals flock to the site to track how the dream of locally owned and operated community health care is unfolding and evolving. The remarkable story of self-reliance and responsibility is shared with off-island family and friends, as they tour the innovative two-storey structure, complete with a state-of-the art Helipad.

Government contributed less than 10 percent to the project and no taxes were raised. Instead, Gabriola's population of 4,000 rallied by taking matters into their own hands, collecting $1.5 million and an equal amount of in-kind donations and volunteer labour.

The stream of visitors includes patients, of course. The building is designed to facilitate visionary, multi-disciplinary, multi-service, patient-centred treatment, integrating primary/urgent health care and overall well being under one roof. Two doctors practising in the centre have long waiting lists. A lower level is being leased to related health and well-being services and a laboratory, making the initiative self-sustaining. And the search is on for two more like-minded family physicians and other health practitioners.

As can be expected, some visitors arrive via ambulance; after the doors opened last summer, 219 patients received urgent treatment in the first six months. The vast majority are no longer automatically transported to the regional hospital in Nanaimo (a half-hour ferry ride away), saving lives, hundreds of thousands of dollars and stress on patients and the system.

In 2002, the sudden loss of the long-standing means of late-night emergency evacuation was the final straw, breaking a fragile, unfunded infrastructure and adding another extreme element to a full-blown, perfect medical crisis storm. Only one full-time doctor was responding to emergencies – without pay from government medical on-call funding – treating patients from the trunk of her car, often using medicine and supplies borrowed from paramedics. The community had raised funds for a defibrillator, but there was no place to store it, no drugs such as clot-busters and no facility to recruit and retain on-call doctors or to diagnose, stabilize and treat patients.

BC Ferries shuffled back and forth, finally making the decision to stop calling on skeleton crews for after-hours evacuations. The social contract and proud service, as far back as anyone could remember, was scuttled. The Nanaimo Harbour patrol vessel was utilized as backup, but too often it was also unavailable because of other duties and priorities. Secondary backups were the open Zodiacs of Coast Guard Auxiliaries.

Dr. Bob Henderson, a rural locum (temporary) physician who lives on Gabriola says, "I remember one winter night when we managed to get a frightened, seriously ill and bleeding patient down a steep incline, inside an ambulance to a private dock and then into a small open boat. After hooking up an IV, we covered the patient with a plastic sheet for protection while being transported over five miles of rough, frigid waters to Nanaimo. There was no room for the doctor on board."

I reported other "horrific," "nightmarish" incidents for the community newspaper, the *Gabriola Sounder* until 2007. Then, in a series of articles entitled "Let's build a medical clinic," a meeting was called for. The Gabriola Health Care Society was immediately incorporated, with free membership offered to all residents (visit www.ghcs.com) and an incredible $30,000 was raised during St. Patrick's Day weekend. The Gabriola Lions, Ambulance Society and other organizations got involved. Volunteers created an interim urgent/primary care clinic in a vacant liquor store and a second on-call doctor was hired.

Island life was transformed, including a dramatic drop in residents with health problems having to move away. A new community vision took shape, gathering support, along with plans for a larger, permanent facility that would offer enhanced and long overdue services and prevention, such as immunizations, counselling, chronic disease care and much more. Over 30 fund-raising events were staged in 2010, "The Year of the Clinic." $27,000 was scooped up in *continued p.37...*

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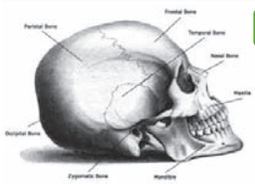

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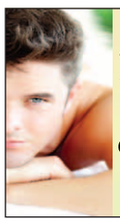

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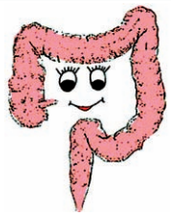

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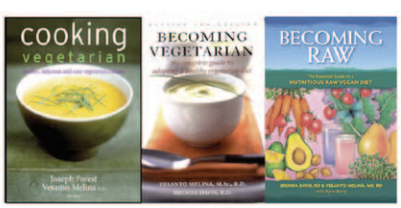

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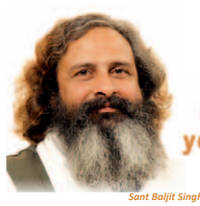

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... ***Resister*** *from p.5*

for what I thought at the time was a noble cause. But there was no cooking for me at all and I ended up in Iraq searching thousands of Iraqi civilian vehicles for explosives. It felt like I was playing Russian Roulette with my life, but I performed my many duties without fear. At first I felt lied to for not being given the job I signed up for, but I just followed orders from my chain of command and I did my job very well.

A Sergeant from another unit passed me an eye opening DVD that he let me borrow with his personal little DVD player. It opened up my eyes to the lies of no weapons of mass destruction and to the fact that many were back home still suffering from hurricane Katrina while billions were being wasted as well as many lives in Iraq for something other than justifiable reasons. I was very upset and I started to view the whole Iraq war in a very different perspective. As my deployment continued, my unit came under military C.I.D investigation for drug trafficking due to an undercover agent who bought some drugs from a black guy in my unit late at night and couldn't fully make out his identity. The next day, our First Sgt. called a formation for just the black soldiers in my unit to wait in the hot sun to be fingerprinted and photographed, in order to find the soldier who was in violation.

After feeling racially profiled for the exact same thing I refused to take part in back home – selling drugs – here I was being treated like I was a potential criminal by white men in the military C.I.D. It was one thing after another during my deployment. I made a friend who was a civilian contractor and then, boom, just like that his helicopter taking him home was shot right out of the sky while taking off from our base of operation, I had to watch racist white soldiers and civilian contractors beat and call unarmed Iraqi men sand niggers and hear them tell me that they mean no disrespect to my people, that we are all brothers in the same fight. I couldn't report anything due to the fact I would be labelled a snitch so I had to keep my mouth shut even though I saw different racist cops back home do the same thing to my black peers, calling us niggers.

I found out the hard way that I was risking my life for a lie.

After my one-year deployment was finished, my unit received orders to return to Iraq within four to six months. I had seen a couple of guys in my unit become victims of Stop Loss, forcing them to be deployed well beyond their contract agreement and after my experience in that unjust war based on lies, I knew I did not want to be another one of former president George W. Bush's cannon fodder or casualty. I just thank God I didn't spill any blood over there because that would have really weighed heavy on my mind after discovering the truth. There is a time and a season for everything, but Iraq was neither the time nor the season for us to go to war with in my new personal opinion.

Instead of returning to Fort Hood Texas after my two-week leave, I left for Canada thinking it would be better than risking my life again or killing for unjust reasons. The Canadian people were very kind and I fell in love and had a beautiful child with a Canadian citizen. I had a job and then after living free with a clearer conscience for three years, I received a letter of deportation from the Conservative government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper when my son was only months old. The date of my deportation, when I was to leave Canada and my new Canadian family, was September 11, 2009. That date felt like a giant slap to my face and it fuelled a fire within me to fight like crazy for my Canadian wife and son due to the fact my wife begged and cried for me to stay. I did the unthinkable and requested sanctuary at a local Vancouver church to give my lawyer time to help me remain with my wife and son. Canada made me very proud when I heard of the massive protest against the Iraq war and that it took no part in that war, but these actions taken against me and other Iraq war resisters felt like a slap in the face. Former president George W. Bush cannot even travel to certain countries without being arrested for war crimes and even Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper publicly called the Iraq war an absolute error.

Deep in my heart, I know it is an absolute error to punish resisters of that unjust war. I have been living in the sanctuary of this church for over three years now and I will not give up fighting the good fight for peace, truth and for love. I now have a new petition in the Canadian courts and I don't know how this will all turn out, but I'm walking by the same faith that kept me alive in Iraq because my wife and son are my heart and soul.

For more information, please visit www.vancouverwarresisters.org with links to Rodney's Facebook page "War Resister in Sanctuary" and his blog "Soul in Sanctuary." The War Resisters Support Campaign is a national organization.

Put Canada First

Leadnow.ca is an independent community that brings generations together to strengthen our democracy and build a fair, open and responsible country. Leadnow.ca's small staff team and 225,000 person community includes Canadians from across the political spectrum. Leadnow.ca was founded two years ago by a group of Canadians who wanted to find new ways to help people hold our government accountable and support political cooperation to meet the challenges of our times. The Leadnow.ca community is independent of any political party.

During a series of local gatherings in the fall of 2011, our community identified electoral reform, inequality and climate change as our top priorities. In 2012 and 2013 we asked our community what they thought about cooperation between the NDP, Liberals and Greens to defeat Stephen Harper and then pass crucial reforms. Amazingly, on both occasions, over 95% of the tens of thousands who responded told us that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with this idea.

Sign the petition at www.leadnow.ca and tell your government:

"I call on the NDP, Liberals and Greens to cooperate for Canada. We can make our government work better for Canadians. During the next federal election, I call on the NDP, Liberals and Greens to work together in key ridings to defeat Stephen Harper's government. After the election, I call on them to cooperate to protect our environment, build a fair economy and pass electoral reform."

In the last federal election, 61% of voters cast ballots for change, but the vote split and our broken electoral system gave Prime Minister Harper a majority of seats in Parliament.

Now, Prime Minister Harper is damaging our democracy, destroying our environmental protections and undermining our economy. We can hold Prime Minister Harper accountable, renew our democracy and rise to the challenges of our times – but we need to work together. Here's how:

During the next election, the NDP, Liberals and Greens can cooperate in key ridings to defeat Stephen Harper's government. After the election, they can work together to fix our broken electoral system, protect our environment and build a fair economy. Canadians are ready for cooperation and we have to act now to send a powerful message to party leaders that Canadians will work together and vote for cooperation.

Canadians are already joining the party of their choice to support cooperation. During the NDP leadership race last year, 10,000 people joined the NDP through this campaign. They built a constituency for cooperation in the party and secured a strong commitment to electoral reform.

Right now, the Liberal Party is preparing to choose its next leader, cooperation is a major debate amongst the candidates and everyone is watching to see if pro-cooperation Canadians will stand up to be counted.

The stakes

Canada is at a crossroads. We need to work together to create a strong democracy that brings Canadians together to make wise choices about how we protect our environment and build a fair economy in an era of global uncertainty. We need to repair the damage that is being done to our country and build new relationships between the people who call this country home.

We need to have a real national conversation and make wise decisions about these urgent issues, but our electoral system encourages an "every party for themselves" style of politics that focuses attention on our divisions and distracts us from the major challenges we face.

More and more Canadians are ready for cooperation: Ready to focus on our shared values, to respect our differences and to take action together on a few key issues. We are calling for a one-time agreement between the NDP, the Liberals and the Greens to work together to stop vote-splitting in a small number of ridings, defeat Stephen Harper and then pass crucial reforms for our democracy, environment and economy.

Cooperation is about more than "winning" an election. For us, the values come first and the strategy comes second. Cooperation is about building a new majority consensus that will renew our democracy, protect our environment and build a fair economy – and ensuring that a majority of Canadians are properly represented in our next government.

The plan

In the 2011 election, a majority of Canadians voted for change, but the First-Past-The-Post voting system gave Prime Minister Harper a majority government with only 39% of the popular vote. In a country of more than 33 million people, Prime Minister Harper's margin of victory was a razor thin 6,201 votes, spread across 14 closely contested ridings.

Our democracy, environment and economy cannot afford a second Harper majority. We need to act now to bring Canadians together to meet the urgent

challenges of our times.

Cooperation is about more than defeating Harper. For cooperation to work, we need agreements between the parties to work together on a few key issues of major concern.

There are a number of different ways to organize cooperation to ensure local democratic control. We believe that the parties, candidates and local riding associations will need to negotiate to develop a solid plan that everyone can agree to.

We need to build a lasting movement for cooperation within the parties. Leadership races are the most important moment for pro-cooperation Canadians to inspire change within the parties and we need to show the parties that Canadians will work together and vote for cooperation.

The values come first, the political strategy comes second. That's why, no matter what path the party leaders choose, we will be organizing at a grassroots level in key constituencies in 2015 to support cooperation to defeat Prime Minister Harper's government and then pass electoral reform, renew our environmental protections and build a fair economy.

We know that Canadians are ready to work together to meet challenges of times and renew our democracy. National polling tells us 80% of Liberal, NDP, and Green voters would be willing to vote for a different party if it meant they would achieve progress on issues they care about.

Canadians are ready for cooperation

Cooperate for Canada includes citizens from across the political spectrum. Many are active members of the Liberals, NDP or Greens. Many care passionately about the future of our country but don't identify with any political party. Some are people who have voted conservative in the past but now feel that Canada is heading in the wrong direction and want electoral reform. All of them feel that this is an idea whose time has come.

From joining the party of their choice to support cooperation in key votes to hosting events that bring riding association leaders together in their communities, "cooperators" are working from the bottom-up to hold Harper accountable and fix Canada.

Learn more and get involved at www.leadnow.ca

An open letter to Canadians from David Suzuki

Joyce Murray's vision for Canada

She calls for progressive elements to work together to avoid election of parties with a smaller proportion of votes. She is boldly pressing for electoral reform through proportional representation to get away from the tyranny of our first past the post system.

I am writing this as an individual citizen, not on behalf of any organization or political party. In fact, I do not belong to any political party. I will support candidates, platforms and policies of any party that move our country towards a more just and sustainable future.

I was delighted to see that the federal Liberal party allows any Canadian to participate in the choice of its leader. I urge everyone who is concerned about democracy, the environment and social justice to take part in this selection process and thereby support for specific policies and visions for this country.

David Suzuki endorses Joyce Murray for Liberal leader

I am heartened by the platform laid out by Joyce Murray. Sustainability is one of the key concepts underlying her policy proposals from food to climate. She recognizes that Canada is one of the most vulnerable industrialized nations to the impact of climate change – as a northern country where warming is going on faster, with the longest marine coastline in the world threatened by sea level rise and the economic vulnerability of climate sensitive areas of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism and winter sports. Her proposal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions includes doing what Sweden, Germany, Australia and even China already do, namely, put a price on carbon, which is both an effective inducement to reduce emissions and a revenue source for much needed initiatives such as public transit, efficiency and renewable energy.

Sustainability is one of the key concepts underlying her policy

Gender equity is a critical issue today and her proposal to mandate targets for government organizations and committees is much needed. And finally, she calls for progressive elements to work together to avoid election of parties with a smaller proportion of votes. She is boldly pressing for electoral reform through proportional representation to get away from the tyranny of our first past the post system so that minority positions can be represented in government.

You can influence the policies of the Liberal party by registering to vote in the leadership race. For me, Joyce Murray presents a platform that I am going to support. I hope you will give her your support too, if you agree.

Sign up to support Murray by March 3

Canadians are joining the NDP, Liberals or Greens to support cooperation. Right now, the Liberals are choosing a new leader, and any Canadian can vote for free and support cooperation in this race, but you must sign up before March 3rd at http://cooperate4.ca/join
Support Joyce Murray at http://joycemurray.ca/endorsements/192-david-suzuki-open-letter>register
After March 3, keep encouraging people to cooperate

Paul Lemay

Liberals shouldn't be too proud

When I was a boy growing up in the '60s and into the '70s, I remember how we used to look up to our prime ministers, regardless of the political party they represented. But after Watergate it seemed the bloom on all political roses began to fall off. Now 40-plus years on, all we're left with are a few thorny stems and the few precious petals we do have are now dried and sandwiched between the pages of a scrapbook.

And politics isn't the only sphere in our oh-so-modern world that has seen a deflowering of its ideals. Take sport, for example. Its first high-profile Watergate equivalent came with Ben Johnson at the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics. But that was only the beginning. A quarter of a century later, the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sports was still making worldwide headlines when Lance Strong-arm's long-running campaign of deceit came to its own long-overdue end. But instead of witnessing any obvious sign of contrition on *Oprah* – Lance Armstrong doesn't do remorse well it seems – we saw a politically calculated confession.

Welcome to the post-apocalyptic new age where all that was once sacred melts in a slow-mo dance before our now more inquisitive tech-savvy eyes. It's an age where the temporary titillation of our appetites for the dethroning of one-time heroes leaves us with little else to celebrate than its putrid droppings.

Oh wait, perhaps I spoke too soon. I forgot the current federal Liberal Party leadership contest. Now there's a cultural campfire we can all gather around for a few more pointed laughs and dethronings on a cold winter's night. But fear not, we've got the CBC's trusty *At Issue* panel ready to tell us how to think about such weighty matters. And in case you hadn't heard – and who hasn't – the latest Liberal contest is an all but done deal if the new 'Delphic Oracle' of Twitter followers is any indication. On that dubious score, J.T. already wears the dented crown.

So forget policy. Forget substance too. And by all means, forget the debates. It's all about Trudeau's great hair and his ability to float like a butterfly and sting like a bee. It's all about the headline act, that and *Mad Men* ad men sizzle, because that's what sells – the only way TV networks seem capable of maintaining herds of entertainment famished viewers.

But I digress. Now for a bit more political substance: On a foggy late January afternoon in Vancouver, 900 devoted Liberals piled into a hall at no less than $20 a head looking for more comparative clarity from those seeking the leadership. Of course, for a party dangling from a fine thread in hope of climbing out of its crevasse of third place, optics matter. So why then did they opt for the swanky Westin Bayshore hotel next to trendy Coal Harbour and Stanley Park rather than a hall in suburban Surrey where the faithful were already gathered for their annual policy conference? No, that was too simple. Better to go through the added expense, risk and hassle of bussing the buggers 25 kilometres downtown like school kids in a well-meaning affirmative action program. Why too did the party decide to charge another $129 to attend a post-debate reception? Great way to promote one's image as a party of accessibility!

Seven years earlier the Conservatives returned to power because three years before that the Canadian Alliance party merged with the PCs.

But let's get to the debate itself shall we. With the Liberal Party looking for a way to rebound into electoral relevance, it doesn't take a rocketman to see it needs to consider cooperating with opposition parties if it hopes to oust Stephen Harper from power. Many believe it's the only realistic way to overcome the devastating effects of vote splitting due to our current first-past-the-post voting system in the short-term. Repeated public opinion polls tell us as much.

CTV's *Power Play* host Don Martin even reinforced the point on his January 22 show reminding viewers how seven years earlier the Conservatives returned to power because three years before that the Canadian Alliance party merged with the PCs.

Of course, none of the prospective Liberal candidates are proposing a merger with the NDP. Yet you wouldn't know from the way Martha Hall Findlay, Martin Cauchon, Deborah Coyne, George Takach, David Bertschi, Marc Garneau and Justin Trudeau talked, blurring that line, and then piling on Joyce Murray and anyone else in the audience who might have the temerity to utter the word "cooperation" with opposition parties in the next election. In fact, all but Murray and Karen McCrimmon seemed downright angry when the topic first came up.

In French, Trudeau asked: "What does it mean to cooperate? It means the priority would be on tossing out [Mr. Harper]… [and] to win and not to serve Canadians." (Huh?) Takach went further: "No cooperation. I don't like it. Harper likes the idea of merger or cooperation." While Garneau said: "…to do so is to be an accomplice to the crushing of the Liberal Party." Findlay not only challenged but some might say even shamed any in the wider audience who might be entertaining such heretical thoughts, chiding (in French): "Where has your confidence gone? I am a proud Liberal. It's with courage we're going to win against Harper in 2015!" Well you got that right Martha, the proud part I mean. What is it they say? Pride always cometh before a fall.

Obviously, it's a touchy subject for many a Liberal, so touchy, it reminds me how Lance Strong-arm so often reacted when asked whether his seven Tour de France victories came with the help of performance enhancing drugs. When he wasn't spewing a string of flustered denials in some legal proceeding or to TV cameras, he'd retaliate by taking some poor slob to court for libel or slander, behaviour he later admitted on *Oprah* was a form of bullying for which he was oh so boohoo sorry.

Of course, those in the "loud and proud" leadership choir have nothing to be sorry about either. Ignore the lingering Quebec sponsorship taint. Forget David Dingwall's unsightly, "I'm entitled to my entitlements" scar. Come to think of it, just forget any and all of the Liberal Party's past sins. They've moved on, which is why they are all proud Liberals again. Phew! Problem solved. Trouble is, not everybody is so forgetful or forgiving, so quickly.

Nobody here is saying Liberals are now devoid of any redeeming qualities. They have many. The problem is that somewhere there still seems to be a lack of genuine humility. Unlike Lance, I can't recall the Liberal Party atoning for its previous sins of pride on *Oprah*. Perhaps a long overdue therapy-couch session *continued p.37…*

Stop the Great Lakes nuclear dump

Do something great for Canada Water Week, March 18-24

Nuclear waste dump fact sheet

1. Ontario Power Generation (OPG), a multi-billion dollar corporation wholly owned by the Province of Ontario, plans to build a nuclear waste dump at the Bruce Nuclear Power Plant site, in the Municipality of Kincardine, Ontario, located approximately one kilometer inland from the shore of Lake Huron at the surface and more than 400 metres below the deepest near-site point of Lake Huron. OPG owns all Ontario's nuclear plants and all radioactive nuclear waste created.

> Forty million affected Canadians and Americans situated throughout the Great Lakes Basin that can and will be impacted if things go wrong were not consulted or informed and receive nothing but risk and uncertainty.

2. Low and intermediate level radioactive nuclear waste will be buried in the nuclear waste dump. Intermediate level nuclear wastes are highly radioactive and many remain toxic for over 100,000 years. Some are as dangerous as nuclear spent fuel. No scientist or geologist can provide a 100,000-year guarantee that this nuclear waste dump will not leak.

3. Approval of the nuclear waste dump in the Municipality of Kincardine (DGR1, Deep Geologic Repository) will set precedents (toxicity of waste, proximity to lake, geology) and smooth the way for the much publicized second underground nuclear waste dump for the high level nuclear spent fuel involving 21 communities (DGR2). Kincardine's DGR1 is the Trojan Horse in our midst.

4. OPG is paying $35.7 million to Saugeen Shores, Huron-Kinross, Arran-Elderslie, Brockton, Kincardine. All are adjacent to the Bruce Nuclear Power Plant site; $10.5 million has already been paid even before approval to construct the dump is received. OPG can unilaterally cancel payment if the municipality fails to support the nuclear waste dump proposal. http://tinyurl.com/b2qtcya/

5. Forty million people in two countries rely on the Great Lakes for drinking water. http://tinyurl.com/aq7q5hw

6. OPG's Environmental Impact Statement document contains 3,432 pages; justification for choosing the Kincardine site is contained in the equivalent of one single page. OPG's comment on acceptability of an alternative site option: "Unknown." http://tinyurl.com/av6jexb

7. An underground nuclear waste dump in limestone is unproven and unprecedented.

8. Nuclear waste dumps in other countries are leaking. http://tinyurl.com/aup4wwm/

9. OPG's proposal is presently undergoing an Environmental Assessment (EA). Public hearings are expected [this] spring. EA Joint Review Panel will report to the federal Minister of the Environment, who in turn will report to the Canadian federal cabinet, the ultimate decision maker – a decision is anticipated within nine months. [March is the assumed end date of the Environmental Impact Statement review period. Summer 2013: Joint Review Panel for the Environmental Assessment Public Hearing hears views about the Environmental Impact Statement and application for a site licence to construct the dump. Submissions will be heard from the public, Aboriginal groups OPG and other stakeholders.]

10. Nuclear waste will be buried in the dump over a 35 to 40 year period. Ten years of pre-closure monitoring to be followed by unmonitored, unspecified institutional control and then abandonment.

11. In the words of Rod McLeod, a former Deputy Minister of the Environment (Ontario) "… the OPG proposal is very unwise." http://tinyurl.com/amoepsw/, Petitioner comment #960.

12. According to William Fyfe, a retired University of Western Ontario professor and an international consultant on nuclear waste, "You do not put nuclear waste near things like the Great Lakes or the great rivers in case there's a leakage that you haven't expected." http://tinyurl.com/arggzco/

13. OPG states, "Taking into account the findings of the EA studies, including the identified mitigation measures, it is OPG's conclusion that the DGR Project is not likely to result in any significant adverse effects on the environment." http://tinyurl.com/av6jexb/

14. Forty million affected Canadians and Americans situated throughout the Great Lakes Basin that can and will be impacted if things go wrong were not consulted or informed and receive nothing but risk and uncertainty.

Please add your voice to the growing list of North Americans opposing Ontario Power Generation's plan to bury nuclear waste on the shores of Lake Huron. Sign our petition and encourage friends, family and others in your network to sign it as well at http://tinyurl.com/aljc9so

Source: stopthegreatlakesnucleardump.com
Contact info@stopthegreatlakesnuclear-dump.com

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Ipperwash

A story of stolen land

Thomas King

In 1942, during World War II, the Government of Canada went looking around for a place to set up a military-training base. Surprise of surprises, they found such a site on the Stoney Point Ojibway reserve in Ontario. Ipperwash.

The government offered the band fifteen dollars an acre for the land. The band refused and the government confiscated the land with the explicit promise to return it after the war. I should mention that wars have provided excellent opportunities for the theft of Indian land. The Stoney Point Ojibway were not the only people to have land confiscated in the interests of a war effort. In 1917, in the dead of winter, the U.S. Army moved the Nisqually out of their homes in Washington State and "condemned" more than two-thirds of the reservation. Then the land was transferred to the U.S. Department of War, which used the gift of 3,300 acres to expand Fort Lewis and construct an artillery range.

Further west on the prairies following World War I, amendments to the Indian Act in 1918 gave Canada's Department of Indian Affairs the power to lease band land and give it to non-Natives for proper cultivation. "We would be only too glad to have the Indian use this land, if he would," lamented Arthur Meighen, the Minister of the Interior and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, "But he will not cultivate this land and we want to cultivate it; that is all."

But back to Ipperwash. The war came and went, as wars will do, yet the land was not returned. Over the years, at various times, the Stoney Point Ojibway protested the original confiscation and in 1996 that protest took on a new life.

In September of that year, about 35 Natives took over the park to call attention to the long- standing land claim. At first, things were reasonably peaceful. And then harsh words were exchanged. An Ontario Provincial Police cruiser had its window smashed. A band councillor had a rock thrown at his car. One story about a woman in a car being attacked with a baseball bat proved to be a fabrication by the police, supposedly for public relations reasons. The pushing and shoving escalated and the confrontation came to a head with police firing on a car and a school bus, wounding two of the Native protestors and killing Dudley George.

I must admit, I know little about Ipperwash. I've never been to the park. What I know of the confrontation that led to Dudley George's death, I know from newspaper and television reports and I have always had a problem trusting those accounts. But I did have an interesting conversation with a government official a year or so after the tragedy. I had gone to Ottawa to give a lecture and on the flight back to Toronto I sat next to a fellow who was actually involved with the Stoney Point Ojibway land claim at Ipperwash. He had heard me speak and wanted to get my opinion on the matter. Now, it's not every day that I get asked by the government for my opinion. Helen hardly ever asks me for my opinion. So I was flattered.

> The more we talked, the more I felt as though I were talking to a bowl of Jell-O. By the time we landed, I realized that I wasn't being asked how the land could be given back so much as I was being given a briefing on why that wasn't going to happen.

Ask away, I said. Ipperwash, he agreed, had been part of the Stoney Point Ojibway reserve and it had been taken as part of the war effort and with the war long gone and the military-training base dismantled, the perception, on the part of the Ojibway certainly, was that the land should be returned. However, the official told me, besides the problem of public perception – the government returning land to Indians, no matter what the circumstances, was not a vote-getter –there was the problem of live ordinance. Because the land had been used as a military range, there were unexploded shells and nasty whatnots in the ground, which made some areas dangerous. What are we supposed to do about that, the official wanted to know. How could the government, in good faith, return land that was unsafe to the Ojibway?

I suggested that the government clean up the land and then return it. The government didn't make the mess, the man told me, the Army did. Now, in my house, if you make a mess, you clean it up. Most of the time.

Okay, I said, have the Army clean it up. They don't have enough money in their budget to do that. Then put the money in their budget. If we do, they'll just spend it on things that are higher priorities. It was a pleasant conversation and the more we talked, the more I felt as though I were talking to a bowl of Jell-O. By the time we landed, I realized that I wasn't being asked how the land could be given back so much as I was being given a briefing on why that wasn't going to happen.

The real problem, the official told me as we sat next to each other on the plane, is the "cultural recalcitrance" of the Ojibway. The hostile feelings, the takeover of the park, the killing of Dudley George could all have been avoided if the Ojibway had simply sold the land to the government in the first place.

Well, that's certainly one way to look at it.

Since that conversation, the government of Ontario, in 2007, did announce that it plans to return the 56-hectare park to the Chippewa of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, though not right away. In May of 2009, a transfer-process agreement was signed stipulating a full transfer of the land within a year. In 2010, legislation was passed to deregulate the park lands, a legal move that was supposed to be the next step in actually returning the land. By May of 2012, nothing more had happened. Though the cleanup of the old military base had begun, the bottom line remains the same. The land still hasn't been returned.

Excerpted from **The Inconvenient Indian** by **Thomas King** (Doubleday Canada). Reprinted with permission.

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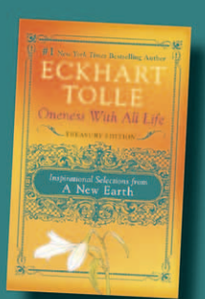

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Science for all

A 14-year-old boy in Donetsk, Ukraine, made a fascinating discovery halfway around the world and 894 metres under the sea. Kirill Dudko was watching Neptune Canada's live-stream footage of the ocean floor near Vancouver Island on his computer when he saw a creature with a "nose and moustache" eat a hagfish. It seemed unusual so he contacted Neptune scientists who checked the footage and identified an elephant seal.

It was unusual. Predators normally spit out the eel-like hagfish or avoid them altogether because they excrete foul slime when threatened. Scientists had never before seen an elephant seal eat one and may not have noticed this evidence had it not been for Kirill. They believe the seal quickly slurped up the hagfish before it could release its slime.

Like many "citizen scientists," Kirill played an important role in advancing our understanding of the world. It takes a lot of study and training to become a scientist, but with some knowledge of scientific method, anyone can practise science.

Citizen science is not a new concept. The Audubon Society started its Christmas bird count in 1900. As the Society explains, from December 14 to January 5, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas grab their binoculars, bird guides and checklists and head outside. "Each of the citizen scientists... makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations and to help guide conservation action."

> The David Suzuki Foundation... [is] asking Canadians to participate in a survey about toxic ingredients in common personal care products.

Thanks to the Internet, citizen science is a more powerful tool than ever before. Some projects are passive, such as Seti@home, where people set their home computers to search for signs of extraterrestrial life when they aren't using them. Others take a bit more effort. The Louisiana Bucket Brigade provides tool kits and training for people who live near oil refineries and chemical plants to take air samples for lab analysis.

Some, like the American Gut project, are highly interactive, requiring participants to provide detailed information about their diet and send in stool, oral or skin samples... The research is designed to "help shape a new way of understanding how diet and lifestyle may contribute to human health through each person's suite of trillions of tiny microbes."

The David Suzuki Foundation has also invited assistance from citizen scientists, most recently asking Canadians to participate in a survey about toxic ingredients in common personal care products like soaps, shampoos and cosmetics.

On its website, *Scientific American* describes a range of citizen science projects designed to do everything from tracking animals in Africa's Serengeti to analyzing historical patterns in human DNA to studying the ways people play with their dogs.

Beyond providing valuable research, citizen science is a fun way for people to engage with nature and learn about the world and their place in it. Some citizen scientists get involved for fun. Others have a general interest in science or a particular research area. Kirill Dudko plans to become a marine biologist. Regardless of their reasons or level of involvement, all citizen scientists help us gain a better understanding of the world and our place in it.

Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation communications manager **Ian Hanington.** Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

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MAR 1-3
Indian Head Massage Weekend Course with Susan Allen. Friday 7-9PM, Saturday & Sunday 9AM-5PM. Course Fee: $395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

MAR 2 & 16, May 25
Complimentary Energy Healing Bodhi Meditation Workshop 9:30AM-5:30PM. 7740 Alderbridge Way, Richmond, (778) 551-1068/ (604) 276-2885, www.putimeditation.org Classes: see "ONGOING" section.

MAR 2-28
Andean Wisdom Teachings with Jhaimy Alvarez-Acosta from Cusco, Peru. Workshops, talks & personal healings. Vancouver. www.childrenofthe7rays.com 778-279-7234.

MAR 10
Jyoti Meditation Free Workshop – 2PM, (Meditation on the Inner Light). Meditation & Ecology Centre, 11011 Shell Road, Richmond. Drop-ins welcome. For info call Linda: 604-985-5840.

MAR 12
Vaccine Summit: Vancouver 2013 featuring veteran researchers & nutritional experts via satellite. SFU downtown, 515 Hastings St. (Fletcher Challenge Rm) 4-11PM, Suggested donation $25. www.vaccineresistancemovement.org

MAR 15-17
Introduction to Hand Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7:30PM, $10; Course $395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, 604) 875-8818 www.pacificreflexology.com

MAR 15-17
Effortless Living: The Yoga of Krishnamurti, with Dr. Ravi Ravindra, Krishnamurti Educational Centre of Canada (near Victoria BC). Info: 250-744-3354, www.krishnamurti-canada.ca

MAR 16-24
A Celebration of the Grey Whale Migration: Whale watching, family events, educational speakers, music, West Coast cuisine. In Ucluelet & Tofino, BC. www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com

MAR 17
Enlightened Living "Regenerative Nutrition" Free Class, 2PM with Dr. Neil Tessler. Meditation & Ecology Centre, 11011 Shell Rd. Richmond. Info / pre-registration: Linda, 604-985-5840.

MAR 17
Brahma Kumaris Meditation Centre: Sunday 5PM. Public program celebrating God's wisdom coming into the world to free us from sorrow and suffering, awakening our spiritual essence. Everyone is welcome. 604 436-4795 or vancouver@ca.bkwsu.org, www.bkwsu.org

MAR 17-23
Pure Meditation – The ideal course for anyone wanting to know themselves and God. Includes the Raja-Kriya yogas and brings joy, wisdom & fulfillment. 1(604)740-0898. www.selfrealizationcentrecanada.com

MAR 23-24
Man/Woman Workshop with John Catalina: The art of relating in an inspired, heartfelt and truthful manner. The tools and shared experiences for enhancing our relationships, coming from our highest selves. South Surrey, 1-760-415-1997, johncatalina@gmail.com www.spiritledpath.com

MAR 24
Easter Full Moon Meditation: A spiritual highpoint of the year – Add to the global network of light. Introduction and hands-on experience of Transmission Meditation. Free, 2:30PM, Roundhouse Community Centre (Pacific @ Davie), 778-866-9568, transmissionmeditation.org

MAR 26
Fill Your Workshops With Ease: Avoid the 3 massive mistakes workshop leaders make. Presented by Callan Rush. Tickets free when you pre-register. In Vancouver. Call Kate at 1-888-686-7409.

MAR 29 – APR 1
Easter Celebration Retreat: Spend this special time in the silence amongst the beauty of the Sunshine Coast. www.selfrealizationcentrecanada.com 1(604)740-0898.

MAR 30
Crystal Light Fair – First United Spiritual Church, 5584 Kincaid St., Bby, 12-5PM. Readers/Healers, Featured Guest Renate Spreitz Access Consciousness Bars Facilitator, www.tandtvancouver.com

APR 5-7
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7:30PM, $10; Course $395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

APR 13
Core & Cellular Healing Workshop, 10AM-5PM, 659a Moberly Road, Vancouver. Experience profound expansion, transformation and healing, $55. 778-997-3525 www.illuminatedhealingarts.com marushaxeros@gmail.com

APR 20
An African Day of Healing for Women followed by The Spirit of the Village annual event to nurture the entire community. www.JackyEssombe.com

APR 20-21
"I Can Do It" - Spend the weekend listening to Wayne Dyer, Gregg Braden, Doreen Virtue, Caroline Myss, and more. At Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Register early. 800-654-5126 or visit www.hayhouse.com/events

APR 26-28
The Power of Presence: Eckhart Tolle's recent teaching, Swanwick Centre (near Victoria BC). Info: 250-744-3354, www.swanwickcentre.ca

MAY 9
Judy Collins in concert: A legend comes to sing her hits, audience favourites and new surprises. Chan Centre, www.ticketmaster.ca 1-855-985-2787.

ONGOING
Energy Healing Bodhi Meditation every Thursday 7-9:30PM, 7740 Alderbridge Way, Richmond, and Mondays Apr15-Jun3, 10-11:30AM at Kitsilano Community Centre.

Experience the Power of Soul Healing with Dr. & Master Zhi Gang Sha. Info: 604-336-4833 and see website for schedule of March events. www.LovePeaceHarmonyVancouver.com

SUNDAYS
"If you like Wayne Dyer, you will love it here." Unity of Vancouver, Sundays 11AM, 5840 Oak Street, Vancouver. www.unityofvancouver.org

TUESDAYS
Reflexology Student Clinic 6–10PM. One- hour sessions $20. By appointment only. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818. www.pacificreflexology.com

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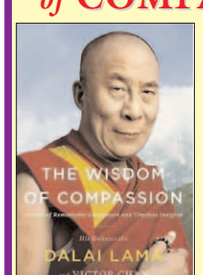

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... ***Liberals*** *from p.32*

with Peter Mansbridge or Evan Solomon is in order?

As a result, many of the Liberal Party's leadership aspirants not only remain overly aversive to inter-party cooperation, they remain oblivious and unresponsive to the wider Canadian electorate's view on the matter. It's easy to say you're listening to Canadians. But let none forget: the first rule of salesmanship is to tell prospective customers what they want to hear. Politicians know that. But if these guys were really listening, every candidate on the dais would at least be open to discussing the idea of cooperating with other parties in the next election, and saying so rather than declaring, in embarrassing flares of peacock pride, they were above all such shameful grovelling.

Let's get real. In some parts of the country, especially where Liberal growth prospects are marginal at best (i.e. the West), inter-party cooperation seems like a no-brainer. Or is it?

Be open to discussing the idea of cooperating with other parties in the next election.

Some, like Chantal Hébert, say it is impractical for parties to compete all across the country except for 57 or so ridings where Conservatives would otherwise win due to vote-splitting. And there is some logic to the argument. Then again, in ridings where Liberals know they're apt to remain on the fighting ring ropes and have little prospect of winning, why not trade the NDP or the Greens one riding for another where they are on the ropes? Trouble is, some fighters don't know when to say uncle, especially when they look at how Muhammad Ali used his rope-a-dope strategy to beat George Foreman during their Rumble in the Jungle fight in 1974. But how many of those are Muhammad Ali level fighters? Not many I'll bet. What's more, even Ali, after he retired, admitted he was scared silly of Foreman's punching power.

So while some leadership contenders may get an ego kick delivering their lines as fast and loose as Ali did in his days, those of us who look at the statistical probabilities based on previous elections and what the electorate is actually saying it wants, would suggest it's time for them to take a humility pill, as Lance Armstrong did, finally. In fact, if Lance was to have any chance for redemption, what other choice did he have? So what makes Liberal leadership aspirants any different? If there's to be any hope of redemption, now is the time for a little less bluster and a whole lot more humility.

Paul H. LeMay is a Vancouver-based independent writer. Originally published at The Hill-Times online, www.hilltimes.com

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... ***Miracle*** *from p.23*

ice cream sales alone. While fundraising is a harsh fact of life in stifling economic downturns and in downsized, dysfunctional government, the rise of the Internet and social media provides new tools for information gathering and sharing, creating and sustaining broad-based ownership and involvement, readily available to smaller grassroots groups.

When resident Bob Rooks, a retired veterinarian, donated 4.1 acres of land, it touched off "2011: The Year of Construction," unleashing another new dimension: the untapped and unprecedented potential of baby-boomers. We Gabriolans discovered that our aging population can create solutions. The new 'elderly' have more years of healthy, productive life than ever before, along with time, funds, expertise and contacts. Architects, project managers, trades-people and others emerged – often, just like the money, when required – buoyed by the joy of healthy commitment and inspiring camaraderie.

The 'miracle' is movable. **Our Clinic,** a new book by Bruce Mason, documents, celebrates and shares the story of the Gabriola Community Health Centre, which was born in crisis, virtually abandoned by government and ultimately created and nurtured by community. Email brucemason@shaw.ca

... *Vaccines* *from p.18*

autism, only a genetically determined difference in the amount present. These enzymes are responsive to estrogen; estrogen protects the brain from being damaged by low Vitamin D, probably by increasing the amount of activated Vitamin D present, explaining why boys are four times more likely to have the disease." Vitamin D3 is not strictly a vitamin in the traditional sense. It acts as a steroid type hormone with uniquely beneficial properties, critical to overall respiratory function.

A mother with several autistic children sent me her own analysis of the overall autistic condition:

"Vaccines and antibiotics kill good bacteria in the intestines leaving room for yeast overgrowth. Prolonged root growth perforates the walls of the intestines. Bad food choices, i.e. those containing gluten and milk products, cause proteins to leak through these holes and attach to the opiate receptors in the brain. Children with autism literally become addicted to this 'heroin.'"

Aluminum

Currently, children are getting 17 shots containing aluminum, a quadrupling of the amount given since the 1970s. It is found in hepatitis A, hepatitis B, DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis), MMR, Hib, pneumococcal and gardasil (HPV) vaccines.

Based on Dr. David Ayoub's findings, children, on average, receive two to 400 micrograms per vaccine, over a milligram of aluminum; a concentration and dosage that is 10 to 20 times more toxic than mercury. Multiple vaccines are far worse, over a 1,000 micrograms, on average, for a triple set shot. Compounding the problem, even more aluminum gets in during the manufacturing process. An indicator that the tools and/or machinery used are not properly monitored for safety.

Acute exposure to heavy metals can lead to a host of auto-immune disorders: Downs syndrome, autism, schizophrenia, ALS, lupus, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease and cognitive dysfunction.

"Heavy metals and viruses in vaccines cause abnormal development in the brain, long-term changes that put a child at high risk of neuro-degenerative diseases, i.e. Parkinson's and Alzheimer's for the rest of their life; also, they become hyper-sensitive to environmental toxins (pesticides, herbicides). Live viruses in vaccines are incorporated into your genetic material and passed on to your children. Many rare forms of cancer are now very common (i.e. pancreatic cancer). Lymphoma is now the number one malignancy in 30-year- olds and rising. Asthma has seen a 10-fold increase over the last two decades. Type 1 diabetes has also been linked to auto-immune disorder caused by vaccines." (Dr. Russell Blaylock)

Dr. Christopher Shaw, Canada's leading neuroscientist, released a stunning peer review study in 2009 linking aluminum in vaccines with motor neuron degeneration found in victims of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and in those with Gulf War Syndrome. It followed another similar groundbreaking study begun in 2007.

Aluminum toxicity in vaccines:

"Research indicates that patients with impaired kidney function, including premature neonates, who receive injections of aluminum greater than four to five micrograms (mcg) per kilogram of body weight per day, accumulate aluminum at levels associated with central nervous system and bone toxicity." (Food & Drug Administration Report)

This means that for a six-pound baby, 11 to 14 mcg would be toxic. The hepatitis B vaccine given at birth contains 250 mcg of aluminum – 20 times higher than safety levels allow. Babies weigh about 12 pounds (5.5 kg) at two months of age when they receive 1,225 mcg of aluminum from their vaccines – 50 times higher than safety levels.

Thimerosal (mercury) is a neurotoxin linked to psychological, neurological and immunological problems. Nervous system damage, kidney disease, birth defects, dental problems, mood swings, mental changes, hallucinations, memory loss, nerve damage and inability to concentrate can occur. Symptoms also include tremors, loss of dermal sensitivity, slurred speech and, in rare cases, even death and paralysis. This additive alone was the catalyst for another recent class action lawsuit organized by mothers of children born with autism and the many related behavioural disorders associated with it. Autism is now occurring at levels never seen before in history: one in 67. The average used to be one in 20,000. Thimerosal mercury is added to vaccines ostensibly to sterilize the giant multi-dose vats containing the serum.

Joel Lord is the founder of the Vaccine Resistance Movement.
www.vaccineresistancemovement.org

The Gatekeepers

From The Gatekeepers. Courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics.

"When you retire, you become a bit of a leftist," says one of the interviewees in Dror Moreh's *The Gatekeepers*, a statement that helps explain why six retired heads of Shin Bet (Israel's internal security service) agreed to share candid insights into their shadowy and frequently lethal profession. While I've only seen clips from the Oscar-nominated documentary at time of writing, it's easy to see why it's been hailed for its revelatory and gripping take on Israel's rocky history in the 45 years since the Six-Day War in 1967.

Much like Errol Morris's excellent portrait of US Cold War warrior Robert S. McNamara did in *The Fog of War*, *The Gatekeepers* examines how behind-the-scenes hard men rationalize the violence of their profession and the moral and legal grey areas surrounding their work. The film, in Hebrew with English subtitles, offers detailed insights into the world of past Israeli covert ops, with its vast network of Palestinian informers and where a target can be neatly "neutralized" with a booby-trapped cell phone with no "collateral damage." As well as archive footage, it uses reenactments and computer generated animation for added immediacy.

While revealing a certain amount of professional pride in their achievements, the interviewees share a deep-rooted distrust of their political masters, as well as regret over the failures of the secret service; in particular, not foreseeing the mass uprising of ultra-right Jews in the Occupied Territories known as the Intifada and the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 by a Jewish terrorist.

Why are these secretive individuals choosing to step into the limelight now? Probably because it provides an opportunity to set records straight and perhaps even to assuage one's conscience. But it also seems to sound the alarm about the direction Israel is taking. "A brutal occupation force that is similar to the Germans in World War Two" is how the grandpop-looking Avraham Shalom (1980-1986) describes the current regime. Like all the former Shin Bet heads interviewed, he advocates negotiating with the terrorists over Israel's big issues such as the two- state solution and the settlements. The suggestion is that, without a more progressive approach, in the words of war hero Ami Ayalon (1996-2000), "We win every battle, but we lose the war."

The 8th annual Women in Film Festival (www.womeninfilm.ca) runs at Vancity Theatre March 7-10. A great networking event and a chance to meet local and international women filmmakers, the festival includes award ceremonies, industry panels, a party on International Women's Day (8th), post screening discussions and a free shorts screening. A real mix of films will be screened and what they all have in common is that all the films were chosen based on women filling at least three of the key creative roles: writer, producer, director, cinematographer, editor, composer or lead performer. Among the films are the US redemption drama *Rumblestrips* about a mum and two girls on a road trip from the Pacific Northwest to the Rio Grande and the Belgian drama *Little Black Spiders*, focussing on the relationships between a group of pregnant girls waiting to have their babies in a secret refuge run by nuns.

Robert Alstead is making the documentary **Running on Climate** (www.runningonclimate.com).

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